

# Rotavirus

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## What is it?

- Rotavirus is a virus that causes gastroenteritis or “stomach flu”.
- It is common in children, although adults can get it.
- You may suddenly develop vomiting, diarrhea, and fever within 1 to 3 days of being infected with the virus.
- Vomiting, diarrhea and fever may last about 4 to 6 days.
- You can become very ill because of fluid loss.

## How is it spread?

- Most of the time the virus is spread by putting something in your mouth that has been contaminated with the stool or mucus from the mouth or nose of a person with Rotavirus.
- The virus can be found on toys and hard surfaces. When you touch these items, your hands can carry the virus to your mouth. The virus can be spread if contaminated items are placed in the mouth. Clean your hands after touching contaminated surfaces.
- The virus can spread through eating or drinking contaminated food or water.
- The virus may be in the stool before diarrhea starts and for several days after the diarrhea stops. In some people with major illnesses and weak immune systems, the virus can stay in the stool for up to 30 days.

## Is there treatment for it?

- There is no specific medicine to treat the virus. Drink plenty of fluids and rest.
- Contact your doctor or health care provider if you become very ill and lose too much fluid.

## What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- A Rotavirus vaccine is available (given by mouth).
- Clean hands before and after using the toilet, before preparing or eating meals and after changing diapers.
- Make sure that whatever is put into the mouth is clean.
- Clean hands before eating or putting your fingers in or near your mouth.
- Clean surfaces that are touched frequently and clean diaper change areas after each use with a disinfectant.
- Dispose of diapers in a sanitary manner.
- Stay home from work if you are infected and have a job where you care for others or handle food.
- Keep infected children home from school or day care until at least 2 days after the illness has gone.
- Follow the instructions by the affected area if there is an outbreak of Rotavirus.

## For more information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/rotavirus/index.html>

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.  
Clean your hands.**

