

Rotavirus-the winter sickness and diarrhea bug

The rotavirus is a very contagious virus that can result in severe sickness and diarrhea in infants and toddlers.

< Gastroenteritis caused by the Rotavirus >

Almost all children aged between 6 months and 2 years of age will experience gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines) due to infection with the rotavirus. Symptoms include severe vomiting and severe watery diarrhea. Stools will often have a milky muddy water color which can be lemon yellow to milky white with a strong smell.

The infection may be accompanied with a high-grade fever. If there are no complications, vomiting usually stops within the first 1~2 days, and diarrhea ceases within a week. Transmission is thought to occur by contact with contaminated feces (and/or vomit) passing to the mouth of another child- the fecal-oral route.

< Treatment >

No specific antiviral therapy is available. Medicines are only prescribed to relieve the symptoms. It is important to maintain adequate fluid and easily digested food intake.

Hospitalization and/or I.V. fluid therapy may be required for patients who continue to vomit and/or are in a state of severe dehydration.

< When treating your child at home >

Nausea, Vomiting ~ Do not force your child to eat if s/he is nauseous or vomiting.

Frequent intake of small amounts of fluids will prevent dehydration.

Please use anti-nausea drugs, if your child does not stop vomiting.



Diarrhea ~ Frequent and severe diarrhea can cause diaper rash. Gently wash the area around the anus with warm water every time when you change the diaper.

Thoroughly washing and rubbing the area around the anus will worsen the situation.

Food and fluid intake ~ Fluid intake is most important. Diluted isotonic water (like a sports drink), weakened tea or diluted apple juice are suitable. Don't just give your child water or tea, try and add a little sugar or salt to the drink.



If your child does not have an appetite, s/he does not have to eat but fluid intake is important.

Infection control ~ Vomit and stools contain a lot of the virus and are highly contagious. Always thoroughly wash your hands after you change the diaper or clean up the vomit.

School or daycare ~Your child can return to school or day-care after his or her appetite has returned, s/he is more energetic and only has 1 or 2 bowel movements a day.

< When to seek further medical advice >

When dehydration is severe, I.V. fluid therapy may be needed. If your child has the following symptoms please seek

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medical advice at once:

Difficulty maintaining fluid intake due to nausea

Dry lips and a dry mouth due to dehydration

Being pale and listless

No tears when crying

Infrequent urination and/or dark urine

