

ROTAVIRAL INFECTION

Diarrhea caused by rotavirus is common in infants and young children during the winter months. It can spread quickly to others, including adult caregivers, in childcare settings.

CAUSE	Rotaviruses.
SYMPTOMS	Vomiting, fever, and watery diarrhea. Sometimes a cough, runny nose, or ear infection is present. Symptoms may last 4 days or longer. Children with rotavirus diarrhea are sometimes hospitalized because of dehydration.
SPREAD	Rotaviruses leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Also, rotavirus can be spread through droplets that are expelled from the nose and mouth during sneezing and coughing.
INCUBATION	It takes about 1 to 3 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms begin.
CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	From 1 to 2 days before until 10 days after symptoms begin.
EXCLUSION	<u>Childcare</u> : Until diarrhea has stopped. <u>School</u> : None, unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently. Exclusion may be necessary during outbreaks.
DIAGNOSIS	Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has the symptoms of rotavirus infection. There is a lab test to detect the virus in the stool.
TREATMENT	No specific treatment is available. Vomiting and diarrhea may lead to dehydration, which may be a medical emergency. Ask a healthcare provider how to prevent dehydration.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- The FDA has approved RotaTeq™ and Rotarix™ vaccines to prevent rotavirus. RotaTeq™ is licensed for infants 6 to 32 weeks of age and is given by mouth as a three-dose series. Rotarix™ is licensed for infants 6 to 24 weeks of age and is given orally as a two-dose series. A different vaccine for rotavirus (Rotashield™) was withdrawn from the market in 1999 due to an increased risk of intussusception, a blockage or twisting of the intestines. Studies of RotaTeq™ and Rotarix™ show that they do not cause an increased risk of intussusception.
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after using the toilet, after changing diapers and before preparing or eating food. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.** Staff should closely monitor handwashing of all children after children have used the bathroom or have been diapered.

ROTAVIRAL INFECTIONS

PREVENTION/CONTROL (CONTINUED)

- Clean and disinfect diapering area and potty chairs after each use and bathroom toilets, sinks, and toys at least daily and when soiled. (See pgs 34-36.)
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled. (See pgs 34-36.)

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.