

Fact sheet

DIARRHEA / ENTERITIS

(Viral gastroenteritis/Rotavirus)

<i>What is Enteritis?</i>	Enteritis is an infection, which may result in vomiting, fever and diarrhea. Rotavirus is a common cause of Enteritis in children, but similar symptoms may result from a variety of organisms.
<i>How is it spread?</i>	Rotavirus and similar viruses are carried in the intestinal tract and are spread to others by direct (person-to-person) or by indirect contact with the organism (contaminated food, water etc.)
<i>What is the incubation period?</i>	Symptoms usually appear 24-72 hours after contact with the virus.
<i>What are the early signs?</i>	Symptoms of enteritis vary, depending on the organism, but may include any combination of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, headache, abdominal pain, loose or watery stools, gas and discomfort. Fever, if present, is usually low grade.
<i>What about contact?</i>	Encourage extra care with hand-washing. Children with symptoms should be sent home.
<i>How long is the person contagious?</i>	Enteritis is contagious from the active stage of the illness until symptoms subside; the virus may shed in the intestines for about eight days.
<i>When is it OK to return to school?</i>	Children with active symptoms should remain at home until the symptoms subside; good hand washing should be encouraged.
<i>Other important information</i>	<p>At the first sign of illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put your child to bed. • Call your family Doctor. • Notify the school your child is ill. <p>Good hygiene controls the spread of disease; practice careful handwashing after using the bathroom and eating or preparing food.</p> <p>Children with diarrhea may become dehydrated easily; they may need extra fluids.</p>

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.

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