

Rotavirus

What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a virus that causes diarrhea among persons in all age groups but is most common among children between six months and two years old.

What are the symptoms of rotavirus infection?

Symptoms of rotavirus include watery diarrhea, often with vomiting, fever, and stomach pain. Symptoms usually last from three to eight days. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite and dehydration (loss of body fluids).

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms usually appear one to three days after a person is infected with rotavirus.

How is rotavirus spread?

The virus is spread through eating or drinking food items contaminated with feces from an infected person. Rotavirus can also be spread by contaminated toys and other surfaces.

How long can someone spread rotavirus?

People infected with rotavirus can shed the virus for as long as ten days after they first become sick.

Is there a treatment for rotavirus?

No specific treatment for illness due to rotavirus is available. Drink plenty of fluids to protect against dehydration. In some cases, people may need to be hospitalized for treatment with intravenous (IV) fluids. Antibiotics and antidiarrheal drugs should not be used.

Can I get rotavirus more than once?

Some people can develop rotavirus disease more than once; even though they had the disease or were vaccinated. However, a person's first infection with rotavirus usually causes the most severe symptoms.

How can I protect myself and my family from rotavirus?

Rotavirus vaccination is the best way to protect children against rotavirus disease. Currently, two different vaccines are available to protect against rotavirus in children. Other ways to protect yourself and your family is through good hand washing and cleaning. Wash your hands with soap and water often. Surfaces contaminated with rotavirus should be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a bleach solution. Disinfectants other than bleach are not effective against rotavirus. Children with diarrhea should not attend day care until the diarrhea has stopped.