

ROTAVIRUS

Rotavirus is a contagious virus that can cause gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines). Symptoms include severe watery diarrhea, often with vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain. Infants and young children are most likely to get rotavirus disease. They can become severely dehydrated and need to be hospitalized and can even die.

CAUSE

Rotaviruses

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms include severe watery diarrhea, often with vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain. Vomiting and watery diarrhea can last from 3 to 8 days. Additional symptoms include loss of appetite and dehydration (loss of body fluids), which can be especially harmful for infants and young children.

SPREAD

The virus spreads by the fecal-oral route; this means that the virus must be shed (present in feces) by an infected person and then enter a susceptible person's mouth to cause infection. Rotavirus can be spread by contaminated hands, objects, food and water.

INCUBATION (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

2 to 4 days

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

2 days before the onset of diarrhea to 10 days after onset of symptoms. Rotavirus may be detected in the stool of immunodeficient persons for more than 30 days after infection. Spread within families, institutions, hospitals, and child care settings is common.

EXCLUSION

Child care and School: Until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting has stopped.

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. Dehydration can be serious; contact a medical professional immediately if dehydration is suspected.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- **Rotavirus vaccination is the most effective way to prevent rotavirus infection in children.**
- 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. Staff should closely monitor handwashing of all children after children have used the bathroom or have been diapered.
- Clean and disinfect diapering area and potty chairs after each use.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/>