

# Rotavirus

## What is rotavirus?

- A virus that belongs to a family of viruses found worldwide as one of the most common causes of diarrhea and vomiting.
- The single most common cause of diarrhea in children younger than 2 years.
- Disease occurs more frequently in cooler months (ie, late autumn to early spring).
- Nearly all children have been infected by the time they reach 3 years of age.
- Children can get infected more than once because the virus has many types.

## What are the signs or symptoms?

- Non-bloody diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dehydration in severe cases
- Generally lasts 3 to 8 days

## What are the incubation and contagious periods?

- Incubation period: 2 to 4 days.
- Contagious period: Virus is present before diarrhea begins and can persist for up to 3 weeks after the illness.

## How is it spread?

- Fecal-oral route (Organism can be found on toys and hard surfaces.)
- Often spread within families

## How do you control it?

- Hand washing, especially after toileting or diapering and before any contact with food or surfaces involved in preparation and serving food.
- Surface sanitation that includes cleaning and rinsing of surfaces with detergent and water and then application of a 70% ethanol solution that is allowed to air-dry or a sprayed on, freshly made 1:64 dilution of household bleach (1 tablespoon of household bleach to 1 quart of water) that completely wets the surface for at least 2 minutes.
- Two rotavirus vaccines are currently under investigation.

## What are the roles of the caregiver/teacher and the family?

- Report the infection to staff designated by the child care program or school for decision making and action related to care of ill children. That person, in turn, alerts possibly exposed family members and staff to watch for symptoms.
- During outbreaks, reeducate staff to ensure strict and frequent hand washing, diapering, toileting, food handling and cleaning, and sanitation procedures.

## Exclude from group setting?

### Yes, if

- The child has diarrhea not contained in the toilet (all infants and children who use diapers or have toileting accidents and have diarrhea must be excluded).
- Child has diarrhea and is able to use the toilet, but he or she has no urine output in 8 hours (suggesting that the child's diarrhea may be associated with dehydration).
- The child is unable to participate and staff determine that they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.
- The child meets other exclusion criteria, such as fever with behavior change (see "Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion" on page 28).

## Readmit to group setting?

- Stool is contained in toilet (for toilet-trained children).
- Even if stools stay loose, if the child seems well and the stool consistency has not changed for a week.
- When the child is able to participate and staff determine that they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.

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