

ROTAVIRUS

What is Rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a viral infection affecting the intestines which affects mostly children.

How is it spread?

Rotavirus is spread mainly by the fecal-oral route and is extremely contagious. People can become infected with the virus in several ways including: eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated; touching contaminated surfaces and then placing their hand in their mouth; or having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms. Viruses may also be spread through the respiratory tract.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The signs and symptoms of rotavirus may include vomiting, fever and watery diarrhea. It is sometimes associated with severe dehydration and death in young children.

What is the incubation period and how long is it communicable?

The incubation period is approximately 24 to 72 hours. It is communicable during the acute stage of the disease and for approximately thirty days after symptoms cease.

How can Rotavirus be prevented?

The best prevention is to wash your hands vigorously with soap and water especially:

- After:** Toilet visits
- Cleaning up vomitus or diarrhea (use gloves)
- Handling diapers (use gloves)
- Handling soiled clothes or linens (use gloves)
- Contact with a symptomatic person
- Before:** Eating

It is recommended to use spray bottles to apply the disinfectant (1 part bleach to 9 parts water, prepared daily) to contaminated surfaces such as toilets, sinks, floors, tables, water fountains or any areas where a sick individual has been.

What should I do about it?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians.

Children and adults with this illness should be free of symptoms for a minimum of 24 hrs before returning to childcare/school/work.

Clusters of two or more persons are considered a **reportable disease** to the Santa Rosa County Health Department (SRCHD).

For more information, please contact the SRCHD at 850-983-5200.

