

STOMACH FLU (Gastroenteritis)

What is Gastroenteritis?

It is a condition that causes irritation and inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Symptoms begin 1-2 days following infection with a virus and lasts around 1-10 days; depending which virus causes the illness.

Causes

The most common cause is viral infection, but can also be caused by bacteria, parasites, and food-borne illnesses. It spreads through contaminated food or water, and contact with an infected person. The best prevention is frequent hand washing.

Signs and Symptoms

- Watery diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Fever
- Chills
- Abdominal cramps (stomach ache)

Treatment

A lot of rest and plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration are the best treatments for stomach flu. Start with small amounts of fluids and progress slowly to give the stomach rest and prevent excess vomiting.

Medications, including antibiotics (which have no effect on viruses) and other treatments, should be avoided unless specifically recommended by a physician.

Contact your physician if you have any questions or problems.