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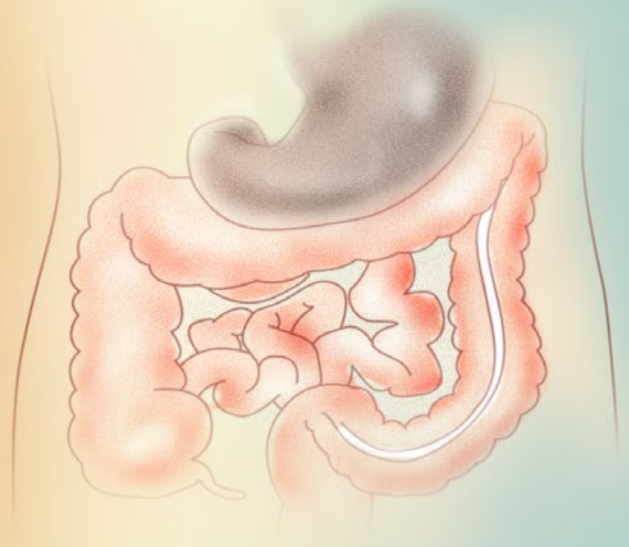
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# Gastroenteritis



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## What is Gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is an inflammation of the stomach and intestines due to acute infection by viruses or bacteria (or bacterial toxins). This causes vomiting and diarrhea, and sometimes abdominal pain, nausea and fever.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the differences between viral gastroenteritis and bacterial gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis caused by viruses such as rotavirus or norwalk virus are usually contracted through contaminated food or drinking water, fecal-oral or droplet transmission. Viral gastroenteritis is epidemic and more frequent during the winter months.



Bacterial gastroenteritis is often due to food poisoning and eating improperly prepared food. Bloody stools may occur for bacterial infection.

### What to do in case of diarrhea or vomiting?

You must replace fluids lost by diarrhea or vomiting and thus avoid serious dehydration which can be fatal. Drinking fluids or electrolyte solutions to replace fluids lost by diarrhea and eating no solid food until the diarrhea or vomiting has passed usually within a week.



However, if the symptoms persist and bloody stools occur, seek medical help immediately.

### Can I take any antidiarrheal medication?

Unless indicated by doctors, antidiarrheal medications are not recommended because the virus or bacteria may be retained in the body and thus prolong the infectious process. Besides, antibiotic therapy is usually not indicated unless systemic involvement is present. Antibiotics do not work for viral gastroenteritis.

## Is gastroenteritis recurrent?

No. But patients recovered from gastroenteritis are more prone to diarrhea or vomiting. To avoid infection, eat well-prepared and clean food and maintain personal and household hygiene.



## Seek Medical Help Immediately

- If the patient is less than 12 months old or is physically old and weak
- If you have severe abdominal pain
- If you have blood in your stool or if your stool is black
- If your diarrhea does not go in 4 days
- If you have symptoms of dehydration, such as dry and chapped lips, poor skin turgor and sunken eyes
- If you have eaten with other people who also have diarrhea, which may imply a spread of infection

## Prevention

Effective measures include building up good body immunity, adopting a healthy lifestyle and adherence to good personal, food and environmental hygiene. If diarrhea or vomiting occurs, do not go to school or work and seek medical help immediately.