

Stomach Flu (Viral Gastroenteritis)

The stomach flu (also called viral gastroenteritis) is caused by a virus (rotavirus, adenovirus, Norwalk virus to name a few) that affect the stomach and small intestines. It may come on suddenly or over the course of a few hours. The illness is usually brief, lasting 24-72 hours.

Symptoms include:

Nausea	Vomiting	Stomach cramps	Diarrhea	Mild fever
Fatigue	Body Chills/Sweats	Loss of appetite	Muscle aches	

To help take care of yourself:

- The best thing to do is to let your stomach rest from solid foods.
- Sip on clear liquids (Hi-C, apple, cranberry, and grape juices, Jell-O, Gatorade- type liquids and ginger-ale or ginger tea). There are special properties in ginger that help soothe the stomach. It is extremely important to keep up your hydration. Water is great for hydration but Gatorade-type products are better because they will restore your electrolytes (Sodium, Potassium and Chloride) which are essential for body functions. You may "stir" the bubbles out of the soda if the carbonation is harsh on your stomach.
- Once you have not vomited for a few hours and your stomach is feeling better, you may start to eat solid foods. You may try crackers, plain noodles, eggs, broth, pretzels and yogurt.
- The BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce & Toast) includes foods that are low in fiber and are easily digested.
- Stay away from dairy products, citric (including orange and grapefruit juices), tomato-based & spicy foods.
- SLOWLY increase your dietary intake to include fruits, vegetables and meat once symptoms are gone (usually over 2-3 days).
- Avoid any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) as these medications are usually harder on the stomach. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is easy on the stomach and may be used for fever, body aches, or headaches. Pepto-Bismol (Bismuth) tablets or liquid can also be used to help with the symptoms.

Please return to the health center during doctor's hours (8:00-8:45 Mon-Fri) if symptoms continue past 72 hours.