Infection Prevention and Control Department

Viral Gastroenteritis
Common Questions Answered

Viral gastroenteritis is a stomach bug that causes diarrhoea and/or vomiting in individuals and may cause outbreaks in hospitals, care homes and schools. It lasts two to three days and in addition to diarrhoea and/or vomiting, people often feel generally unwell with a raised temperature, headache and aching limbs. The illness is usually mild in nature and gets better without any treatment.

The incubation period (time taken from catching the bug to becoming unwell) is usually one to two days and people remain infectious for 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped.

Why is it a problem?

The infection spreads very rapidly because the virus is in the vomit and diarrhoea of those affected. Large numbers of people can be affected quickly so it is important to stop the illness from spreading to others.

How can I help reduce the spread of infection?

- The most important thing to do to avoid catching viral gastroenteritis or passing it on to someone else is to always wash your hands after using the toilet, changing nappies and before eating. Wash with soap and water and dry thoroughly or use the alcohol hand gel provided on the ward.
- Do not share items with other patients, particularly food.
- Do not leave food uncovered as it may become contaminated.

In addition, we may:

- Postpone non-urgent investigations and appointments e.g. some x-rays, ECGs, Endoscopy, Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy.
- Postpone transfer to other wards, hospitals or care homes.

compassionate care

How can my visitors help reduce the spread of infection?

- Visitors with symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea and/or abdominal pain, must not visit the ward until 48 hours after their last symptom.
- Visitors should be kept to a minimum. All visitors are at risk of catching this infection and the elderly and very young children can be particularly unwell if they become infected.
- Visitors should wash their hands with soap and water when entering and leaving the ward and if helping their relative with cares. Alternatively they can use the alcohol gel provided on the ward.
- If your visitors have to visit other areas in the hospital, please ask them to go there first before visiting this ward.
- We request your visitors stay with you during visiting, as visiting other patients on the ward may pass on the infection.
- Visitors should refrain from eating and drinking during visits to the ward.

What happens to my laundry?

- Clothes can easily become soiled whilst you are symptomatic. We therefore advise that hospital nightwear is used until your symptoms have gone.
- If your own clothing becomes soiled, it will be put in a water soluble bag and placed in your locker. This must be taken home as soon as possible. These clothes should be washed in the bag, separately from other clothes, on the hottest wash appropriate for the garment.
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly after handling soiled linen.

What food and drink can I have?

- Diarrhoea and vomiting can cause dehydration, so it is important to drink plenty of fluids.
- Drinking through a straw may prevent the feeling of nausea.
- Small frequent meals may help recovery.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Infection Prevention and Control Nurses

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

Telephone No: (01484) 342447

Calderdale Royal Hospital

Telephone No: (01422) 222376

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obrat'te se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym fomacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,

ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉੱਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
براہِ مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"