



Health Corner

“Loose stomach, upset stomach, diarrhea”

Could it be *Rotavirus*?

What is Rotavirus? Rotavirus is a contagious virus that infects the intestinal tracts of almost all young children by the age of 5. Outbreaks usually occur in the winter and early spring, between November and April, in settings where many children are together. The virus is very contagious and spreads through contact with the stools from an infected child. Often children get the rotavirus germs on their hands and get the infection when they put their hands in their mouths. Usually this happens when kids don't wash their hands often enough, especially before eating and after using the toilet.

What are the symptoms? Children with rotavirus infection have frequent watery diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach upset, and sometimes fever. Symptoms can last anywhere from 4 to 8 days. Severe diarrhea along with vomiting can quickly lead to dehydration (tired, pale, dry mouth, decrease in urination), so it is important to keep an eye out for this complication.

How is it treated / prevented? It is most important to help keep your child comfortable and well hydrated. In general, kids with mild diarrhea who are not dehydrated should continue to eat normally but should receive more fluids. Children with severe diarrhea and dehydration may require special oral rehydration solutions or intravenous (IV) fluids, and should be under the care of a pediatrician. Kids who are infected should stay home until their diarrhea has ended.

Frequent hand washing is the single best tool to limit the spread of rotavirus infection!

ISL Policy

- If your child has any of the above symptoms, please consult with your local doctor.
- Encourage your children to wash with soap and water after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Children should only return back to school once the diarrhea has ended and once they are completely symptom-free.