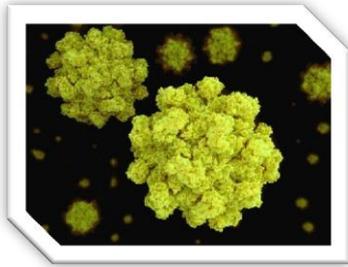


HEALTH ADVISORY: Gastroenteritis outbreak



What is Gastroenteritis (also known as stomach flu or food poisoning)?

Gastroenteritis is a stomach and/or intestinal infection which produces watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea or vomiting, and sometimes fever. Possible causes include ingestion of food or water that has been contaminated by viruses/bacteria, their toxins and occasionally parasites. Symptoms may start within hours to days after consuming the contaminated food. Depending on the cause of the inflammation, symptoms may last from one day to more than a week.



What is an outbreak of food poisoning?

An outbreak is the occurrence of more cases of food poisoning than expected for a particular place and time resulting from the ingestion of a common food/water source.

What treatment is available for food poisoning?

In most cases of food poisoning, treatment is mainly supportive. This means drinking adequate fluids and isotonic drinks, eating small, low-fat meals, and resting as needed. Make sure that you're urinating normally and that your urine is light and clear.

Antibiotics are not usually recommended but may be used for some types of bacterial or parasitic infections. In most cases, symptoms resolve quickly and no special treatment is necessary. Those with persistent diarrhoea and/or vomiting leading to poor intake will need to be given intravenous fluids in order to prevent dehydration. Based on your doctor's assessment, blood and stool samples may be needed for further assessment of your condition and assist in the investigation of the outbreak.





How soon can I resume my duties at work?

All workers having symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea and fever should be regarded as infectious, and should stay away from places such as school, child-care and avoid duties requiring handling of food and beverage. This would help minimise further transmission of the infection. It is recommended that workers who still have symptoms and are directly involved in handling/packing/preparing food should not work until 48hrs after their symptoms have resolved.

Your doctor would issue you a medical certificate of 1-2 days based on the severity of your symptoms and arrange for you to return for a review, if necessary.

When do I need to return to see the doctor sooner?

You are advised to revisit the doctor sooner should you develop any of the following:

- ❖ Frequent episodes of vomiting and inability to keep liquids down
- ❖ Bloody vomit or stools
- ❖ Diarrhoea for more than three days
- ❖ Extreme pain or severe abdominal cramping
- ❖ Fever that is not settling.
- ❖ Signs or symptoms of dehydration — excessive thirst, dry mouth, little or no urination, severe weakness, dizziness, or light-headedness
- ❖ Neurological symptoms such as blurry vision, muscle weakness and tingling in the arms



What can I do to help stop the outbreak?

- ✓ Contain the infection through proper handwashing /sanitising technique

How often should I wash my hands?

- ✓ Before and after meals
- ✓ Before handling food
- ✓ After touching shared surfaces, like table tops, doorknobs, handrails, etc
- ✓ After blowing your nose
- ✓ After using the toilet

Hand Hygiene

Hand Rubbing and Washing Techniques At A Glance

Objective:

remove micro-organisms which may cause transmission of infections.



Hand Rub

Start by applying a palmful of sanitiser for hand rub



Hand wash

Wet hands before applying soap for hand wash



1. Rub hands palm to palm



2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



3. Palm to palm with fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa



7. Rotational rubbing of right wrist and vice versa



Hand wash

For hand wash, rinse off soap completely and dry hands thoroughly after washing



- ✓ **Ensure proper food storage and cleanliness of food preparation areas. Perform environmental cleaning on frequently touched surfaces 2-3 times daily including:**
 - Toilets,
 - Hand railings,
 - Tables and chairs,
 - Door handles,
 - Telephones,
 - Computer equipment etc

- ✓ **Staff directly involved in food handling duties , who are still having vomiting/diarrhoea or fever should not perform their duties till 48 hours after resolution of symptoms or as recommended by their doctor.**

- ✓ **Suspend all group events during the outbreak to reduce food sharing opportunities, eg functions, outings.**

- ✓ **All food handlers even if they have not reported symptoms, should be screened by a doctor for symptoms and undergo stool examination to ensure that they are not passing the infection unknowingly.**

Date created: 8th July 2016



**FOR CORPORATE ENQUIRIES, CONTACT US AT 6557 6861 OR
RAFFLESONE@RAFFLESMEDICAL.COM**

