

★ Hand hygiene practice is very important in preventing the spread of gastroenteritis. We recommend washing your hands when you both enter and leaving your child's room, after nappy changing and before feeding your child.

★ A plastic apron must be worn when you are caring for your child, and put in the bin before leaving your child's room



We recommend that visiting is restricted to parents only to reduce the risk of spread of the infection to other children on the ward and in the home.

Going Home

Some children may have diarrhoea for up to 10 days, so unless a faeces sample has tested negative in a laboratory we assume that each child still is affected by the virus until bowel motions return to normal.

We would recommend that children only return to school or child care when their bowel motions return to normal. It may also take a few days for your child to regain their normal appetite.

Please remember to wash your hands or use hand gel when visiting the Hospital

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Gastroenteritis

Information for Patients, Parents and Carers

Infection Prevention and Control Team

Main Hospital Number

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What is it?

Gastroenteritis is an infection where there is sudden vomiting and / or diarrhoea. Often, a child will also have a temperature.

The most common cause of gastroenteritis is infection by a bacteria or virus, which affects the lining of the gut or bowel.

Rotavirus and adenovirus are the most common causes of gastrointestinal infection in children. The second most frequent is norovirus. Norovirus is also known as the winter vomiting bug. Gastroenteritis caused by bacteria is less common and includes salmonella and campylobacter.



Sign and Symptoms

Your child may:

- ★ Be unable to tolerate any solid food and/or fluids.
- ★ Pass bowel motions that are only fluid or semi formed and may be an unusual colour or smell.
- ★ Have a temperature
- ★ Feel sick/nauseous and have a tummy ache.
- ★ Have dark circles around the eyes, a coated tongue and breath that smells.
- ★ Feel listless and uninterested and may sleep for longer periods than usual.
- ★ The soft area in the centre of the head may be sunken (for babies only).

Diagnosis

A sample of your child's bowel motion will be sent to the laboratory for tests. Please tell your child's nurse if your child has diarrhoea or loose bowel motions to make sure a sample is taken and sent to the laboratory.

Treatment

If necessary your child, will be admitted to hospital to correct dehydration caused by vomiting and /or diarrhoea. To do this an intravenous infusion (drip) is inserted to their vein. Once the vomiting has settled, your child will then be given small amounts of fluid to drink. Once they are drinking enough and their temperature has settled, they will be allowed home.

Precautions

- ★ Gastroenteritis is spread from the hands to the mouth. Viruses have also been found to live on toys and hard surfaces. Children diagnosed with gastroenteritis staying in hospital are isolated from other children to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others.
- ★ When possible, children are cared for in a single room; however, occasionally it may be necessary to care for two or more children with the same infection together in a ward area.
- ★ These precautions are continued until the vomiting and/or diarrhoea have stopped for a period of at least 48 hours.