

WHAT IS THE STOMACH FLU?

Signs & Symptoms of the Stomach Flu Depend on the Cause

The Most Common Causes of Gastroenteritis are Viral

What is often referred to as the stomach flu is actually gastroenteritis, an infection of the stomach and intestines. Influenza, or the flu, is a viral respiratory infection that causes sore throat, runny nose and general aches and pains. It rarely causes stomach problems.

What causes gastroenteritis? How long does it last? What are the symptoms and how is it treated? Please read the following guide to find answers to these questions.

01 | What Causes Gastroenteritis?

The most common cause of gastroenteritis is the Norovirus. Norovirus spreads quickly in crowded places, causes outbreaks in day care centers, schools, cruise ships, hospitals and nursing homes. Other viruses that cause gastroenteritis include adenovirus, astrovirus and rotavirus.

Diligent hand washing is the best way to prevent viral gastroenteritis, as it spreads via the “fecal-oral route.”

Other causes of gastroenteritis include:

- Food allergies
- Parasites
- Drugs
- Toxins
- Side effects of medications
- Bacterial infections

02 | What are the Symptoms?

Unlike food poisoning, where symptoms strike fast and hard, gastroenteritis symptoms develop gradually, over one or two days. Most patients will experience the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea

- Nausea, vomiting and abdominal cramping
- Mild fever with chills, headache and muscle aches

03 | Treatment

Gastroenteritis is considered “self-limiting,” meaning it will play itself out and does not normally require medical intervention. Dehydration is the biggest risk, so supplementing with an oral electrolyte solution is recommended. Over-the-counter bismuth subsalicylate and antidiarrheal medication can relieve symptoms until the virus passes.

If a patient experiences any of the following symptoms, they should contact their medical provider:

- Bloody stool
- Bloody vomit
- Extreme lethargy, confusion or otherwise altered mental state
- Lack of urine or dark and concentrated urine
- No improvement of symptoms after three days
- Prolonged vomiting
- Temperature of over 101.5° Fahrenheit

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/viral-gastroenteritis>

***Did You Know?**
Dehydration is the biggest risk of gastroenteritis*

References

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20568435,00.html#gut-trouble-0>

https://www.medicinenet.com/gastroenteritis_stomach_flu/article.htm#stomach_flu_gastroenteritis_definition_and_facts