



## **GASTRO-INTESTINAL VIRUS**

There are **many** viruses that can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. These viruses are common in the cold weather months. The Health Center sees patients every year with these symptoms. These viruses affect the gastrointestinal system. The good news is that these viral symptoms are usually over within 12-24 hours.

**PREVENTION:** Avoid sharing air space and eating or drinking utensils with others. Frequent and good hand-washing technique is always a good preventive measure. Avoid visiting ill people, and remember to disinfect the telephone, computer keyboards, doorknobs that others may have touched. Use a hand-sanitizing product when you can't use soap and water.

### **WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR NAUSEA AND VOMITING?**

**TAKE NOTHING BY MOUTH:** When nausea and vomiting begins, stop drinking all oral liquids. Rest your stomach for approximately two (2) hours after the last time you vomit. After 2 hours, you may begin to take sips of a sport-type drink (i.e. *Gatorade*) or water. We recommend that you only take 1-2 Tablespoons every 15 minutes for the first hour. If no vomiting occurs, you may increase the amount of clear liquids you drink. You should keep to a clear liquid diet for the first 12 hours.

### **WHAT IS A CLEAR LIQUID DIET?**

A clear liquid diet consists of anything that you can "see through". This includes, sodas, apple juice, cranberry juice, *Jello*, and clear-base broth from non-greasy soups, bouillon, Popsicles, water, tea, *Kool-aid*, and sport-type drinks.

After 12 hours you may advance to a bland diet, adding dry toast, banana, applesauce, etc. Avoid fried or greasy foods, gas-forming vegetables and fruits, and if you have had any diarrhea, avoid dairy products for 48 hours after your last liquid stool.

### **WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR DIARRHEA?**

Gastrointestinal viruses often cause diarrhea, or liquid stools. UHS health professionals recommend that you wait a few hours to treat diarrhea. Diarrhea becomes a concern when you cannot drink enough liquid to replace the fluid loss of diarrhea. Once you have the nausea and vomiting under control, usually the diarrhea slows down also.

### **WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT?**

You should come to the Health Center when you:

- Are still vomiting after trying the previous listed suggestions
- You are having massive amounts of diarrhea
- If you have severe abdominal pain
- If you "faint" or "black out" when you stand and walk.

