



# GASTROENTERITIS ("STOMACH FLU")

## What is Gastroenteritis?

It is a viral illness that causes nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea, stomach cramps and sometimes fever.

Although it's commonly called stomach flu, gastroenteritis isn't the same as influenza. Real flu (influenza) affects only your respiratory system. Gastroenteritis, on the other hand, attacks your intestines

## Treatment/Symptom Management:

- **Thorough and frequent handwashing is your best defense**
- **Stomach Rest** don't eat or drink anything for 2 hours, then start by taking sips of clear liquids such as water or electrolyte fluids (gatorade/pedialyte).
- **Ease back into eating** with small amounts of bland, easy to digest foods, such as saltine crackers, toast, bananas, rice.
- **Avoid certain foods or substances** dairy, caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and fatty or highly seasoned foods.
- **Over the counter medications:** bismuth tablets/liquid (Pepto Bismol), or Emetrol may prove helpful. Avoid ibuprofen as it may further irritate the stomach lining.
- **Rest** the illness and dehydration may make you weak and tired. Allow your body to recuperate.

## Call UHS if you:

- Develop fever 102 F or higher
- Have severe abdominal pain
- Develop bloody diarrhea
- Feel dehydrated- not urinating or very sticky mouth



## How is it spread/caused?

Gastroenteritis is usually caused by noroviruses. The most common way to contract it is through contact with an infected person, or by ingesting contaminated food or water. The virus can live on hard surfaces for short periods of time, such as door handles and other hard surfaces. Those confined to close quarters, such as dorms, are more susceptible.

If you are generally healthy, you'll recover without complications in 1-3 days. There's no effective treatment for this viral gastrointestinal illness, so prevention is key!

Check out the latest updates and more details from **the Mayo Clinic:**

