



For Staff Education

Rotavirus

What is it?

- Rotavirus is a common virus that causes diarrhea
- It is a cause of severe diarrhea in young children (up to 3 years of age)
- It is also a cause of illness in the elderly, especially those living in long-term care facilities, and it may also cause traveller's diarrhea in healthy adults
- Symptoms include vomiting, watery diarrhea lasting 3-8 days, abdominal pain and fever

How is it spread?

- Direct contact
 - Somebody comes into direct contact with the feces or vomit of an ill person
- Indirect contact
 - The virus gets on an environmental surface (i.e. doorknob, light switch, etc.) that is then touched by other people

**Direct and indirect transmission usually happens when someone comes into contact with feces or vomit of an ill person and then eats without first washing their hands*

Where is it found?

- People are the natural host
- It is found in the gastrointestinal tract and the feces or vomit of infected people

Prevention and control

- Use contact precautions (in addition to routine practices) when caring for anyone with new or different diarrheal illness
- Clean hands well and often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the environment is done, paying particular attention to high-touch surfaces
- Wear gloves when handling soiled linen, and refrain from shaking or disturbing soiled linen to reduce the amount of infected stool or vomit released into the air