

## **ROTAVIRUS FACT SHEET**

### **What is Rotavirus?**

Rotavirus is a virus that causes severe diarrhea in infants and very young children (ages 3 months to 2 years of age) in the United States. Most children will have this illness by the age of 2. The disease usually occurs during the months of November through May. Adults are rarely affected by this disease.

### **How can you be exposed to Rotavirus?**

Rotavirus is easy to get from other people. The virus is spread by personal contact, such as hand to mouth contact with stool from an infected person. The virus can also be spread when a person touches a surface or object that has been contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her mouth, nose or eyes.

### **How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

Most people begin to have symptoms from 19 to 48 hours after being exposed to the virus.

### **What are the symptoms for Rotavirus?**

The most common symptoms of rotavirus are fever, nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and diarrhea. Diarrhea can be mild to severe and generally lasts 3 to 9 days. A sick person may have only some symptoms. Children may get a cough or runny nose. Adults may not show symptoms at all.

Rotavirus can make children very sick when they lose body fluids fast and become dehydrated. Severe dehydration can be very serious, especially in infants. Signs of dehydration are dry mouth and tongue, restlessness, irritability, thirst, and fewer diaper changes for infants. If these symptoms occur, contact your child's doctor.

### **How can the Rotavirus be prevented?**

Practicing good hygiene can reduce an illness from rotavirus. The best way to reduce the spread of the virus is by washing your hands regularly! Teaching children how to wash their hands correctly will help them stay healthy. Those who care for infants must keep their hands and toys clean because infants often put their hands and toys in their mouth. Currently, there is a vaccine to protect infants from the virus.

When an infant or child is sick they should stay home until their diarrhea stops. This will help reduce the spread of the virus.

### **Where can I get more information?**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

### **Source of Information**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)