



Rotavirus

Rotavirus is a virus that causes diarrhea and vomiting. It is the most common cause of diarrhea in children under two years old.

What are the symptoms?

Rotavirus typically causes non-bloody diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

The symptoms usually last 3-8 days but the virus can be present before diarrhea begins and last up to three weeks after symptoms disappear.

How is the disease spread?

Rotavirus is spread by direct contact (fecal-oral route) with contaminated food or objects (i.e. toys or surfaces frequently touched by children).

How is it diagnosed and treated?

Your child's healthcare provider may make a diagnosis of rotavirus based on your child's symptoms. While not typically done, a stool sample may be collected and analyzed to confirm diagnosis.

There is no treatment for Rotavirus. The virus is self-limiting. Your child may need extra fluids in order to prevent dehydration. If you notice a decrease in your child's urine output or if your child cries with few or no tears, had a dry mouth, is unusually sleepy or fussy contact your child's healthcare provider.

How can the spread of the disease be prevented?

1. Good handwashing especially before preparing meals and after diapering a child.
2. Clean all meal preparation surfaces and surfaces children touch frequently.
3. Clean children's toys frequently – a diluted bleach mixture can be used to clean and sanitize items or surfaces.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), recommends routine vaccination of children against Rotavirus. Two vaccines are available to prevent the spread of Rotavirus. Rotateq is a 3 dose series and is recommended to be given at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months. Rotarix is a 2 dose series recommended to be given at 2 months and 4 months.

Who should be excluded?

Children should be excluded from childcare if they are experiencing more than 2 loose stools per day or diarrhea cannot be contained in diapers as it impedes the caregiver's ability to care for other children in a safe and sanitary manner.

Reportable?

No, rotavirus is not reportable by New Hampshire law. However, the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control professionals are available for consultation at (603) 271-4496.