

## WHEN CAN CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL/DAYCARE?

Gastroenteritis is highly infectious illness. To avoid spreading to others:

- Children should rest and not attend any school or other childcare facility while diarrhea or vomiting caused by gastroenteritis.
- Children should not go back to their school or other childcare facility until at least 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhea or vomiting.
- Children should not swim in swimming pools for 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhea.



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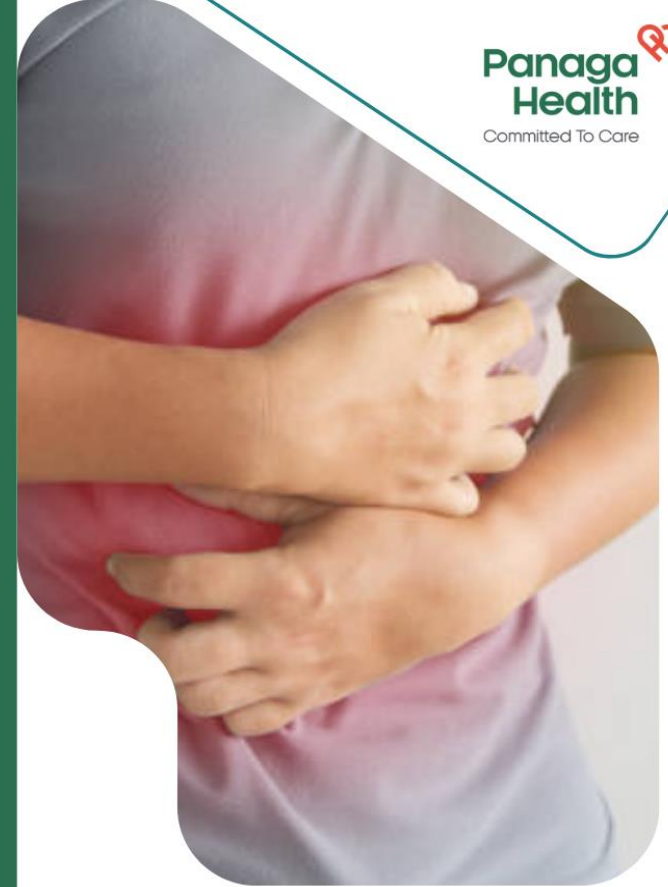
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# GASTROENTERITIS (STOMACH FLU) WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## WHAT IS GASTROENTERITIS?

Gastroenteritis (sometimes called the stomach flu) is a short-term illness triggered by infection of the digestive tract. In most cases it is not harmful, however, can become dangerous if it leads to dehydration.

Although gastroenteritis is called the stomach flu it is not actually the flu. The flu (influenza) is a disease that affects your respiratory system (nose, throat, and lungs). Gastroenteritis attacks your digestive system and can lead to the symptoms below.

## COMMON SYMPTOMS

Symptoms that's commonly felt within 24 -72 hours:

- stomach cramps/pain
- watery diarrhea
- nausea
- vomiting
- low-grade fever



## WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- If vomiting/diarrhea has not stopped after 2 days.
- If blood is seen in your vomit or bloody stool.
- If you have not been able to keep any liquids down for 24 hours.
- Fever.
- Severe stomach pain.
- Signs of dehydration include: excessive thirst, dry mouth, dark yellow urine, or little to no urine (no wet nappies), severe weakness, and dizziness/lightheadedness.
- Additional signs of dehydration in children/infants - Hasn't had a wet nappy in six hours, crying with no tears, unusually sleepy or unresponsive, and sunken soft spot (fontanel) in the top of their head.

\*Those at higher risk of severe dehydration include infants, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems. Hospitalization may sometimes be needed for rehydration through intravenous.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Continue normal diet.
- Encourage fluid intake if able to drink.
- Discourage drinking fruit juices and carbonated drinks.
- Children/infants: Continue breastfeeding and other milk feeds.
- \*Your doctor may suggest oral rehydration salts as supplemental fluid.
  - (<2 years 50-100ml and >2years 100-200ml after each loose stool).

## PREVENTION TIPS

Gastroenteritis is often caused by contaminated food or water or close contact with someone who is infected. **Prevention starts with good hygiene.**

- **Vaccinations:** Ensure you/your children are up to date with vaccinations (including rotavirus).
- **Hand hygiene:** Wash hands before and after using the toilet or changing diapers, before/after preparing or eating food and whenever they appear soiled. Use warm water and soap (liquid if possible) rubbing together for 20 sec, rinse well and dry thoroughly with a clean towel. Carry hand sanitizer for times when soap and water are not available.
- **Isolate:** Avoid close contact with anyone known to be infected.
- **Personal items:** do not share utensils, towels or other personal items, do not touch clothing and bedding of those infected, wash in hot water.
- **Food hygiene:** Use bottled water, avoid raw or undercooked foods, wash or peel fruits and vegetables.