

## **Viral Gastroenteritis (Stomach flu)**

### **What is gastroenteritis?**

Gastroenteritis is an intestinal infection that is usually caused by a viral illness. Signs and symptoms include watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea or vomiting, and sometimes fever.

### **How is viral gastroenteritis spread?**

The viruses that cause gastroenteritis are highly contagious. They can spread from direct contact with an infected person, from ingesting contaminated food or water, or from touching objects that are contaminated.

### **What is the treatment for viral gastroenteritis?**

For most healthy individuals, viral gastroenteritis will resolve on its own. The primary treatment is hydration- drink plenty of fluids (avoid caffeine). Some people will require hospitalization if they become too dehydrated. Antibiotics do not help viral gastroenteritis.

Prevention is important- good hand washing, do not prepare food for others if you are infected, clean infected surfaces and laundry.

### **When should you see a doctor?**

- Poor eating and drinking that has led to dehydration (dry mouth, decrease in urine)
  - Bloody diarrhea
  - High fever