



Infectious diarrhea

Diarrhea is more stools (bowel movements) that are looser and watery when compared to your normal pattern. It can be caused by germs like *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella*, and rotavirus.

If you think your child has infectious diarrhea:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Keep your child home from childcare** until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped. Follow the guidelines for the specific germ if your child was tested and the germ is known.
- School aged children do not need to stay home, unless they are not feeling well and/or have diarrhea and need to use the bathroom frequently.
- Anyone with diarrhea should not go in lakes, pools, splash pads, water parks, or hot tubs until after diarrhea has stopped.
- For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

Parent/Guardian information

Symptoms

Your child may have stools that are loose and runny compared to normal. There may be blood and/or mucus in the stool. Other symptoms may include a stomachache, vomiting, and fever.

If your child is infected, it may take 1 day to 4 weeks (sometimes longer) for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By eating or drinking food or beverages contaminated with stool.
- By touching hands, objects, or surfaces that have been contaminated with stool.

Contagious period

The illness can spread as long as germs are in the stool.

Call your health care provider

- If anyone in your home has symptoms. There may be a medical test to identify the germ.
- Treatment may be available, depending on the germ that is causing the diarrhea.

Infectious diarrhea

Prevention

- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers. Wash hands before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Wash hands after touching pets or farm animals.
- Clean and disinfect any objects that come in contact with stool. This includes toilets, potty chairs, sinks, toys, and diaper changing areas. Use a product that kills germs.
- Avoid swallowing water when in lakes, pools, splash pads, water parks, or hot tubs.

Hennepin County Public Health
Epidemiology
612-543-5230
epi-envhlth@hennepin.us

Updated December 2023

