



Enteroviruses

School health and childcare provider information

Cause

Coxsackieviruses, echoviruses, or other enteroviruses.

Symptoms

Cold-like symptoms, sore throat, body aches, mouth sores, fever, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea are the most common symptoms. Some people may not have any symptoms.

These viruses often cause mild infections such as colds, sore throats, and gastrointestinal illnesses. Less often enteroviruses can cause pneumonia, meningitis, encephalitis, myocarditis, or acute flaccid paralysis.

Spread

Enteroviruses leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Also, when a person infected with enterovirus coughs, sneezes, or vomits tiny droplets into the air, and another person breathes them in. Pregnant people who get infected before delivery can transmit the virus to their newborn.

Incubation

It usually takes from 3 to 6 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms begin.

Contagious period

During illness and possibly for several weeks after illness (through contact with stool). Infected persons who may not seem sick are still able to spread the infection.

Exclusion

Childcare: Until 24 hours after diarrhea and/or vomiting has stopped. For mild, cold-like symptoms, no exclusion, as long as the child is well enough to participate in routine activities

School: None, unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently.

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Treatment

No specific treatment is available.

Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, touching nasal secretions, and before preparing or eating food. **Through handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.** Staff should closely monitor handwashing of all children after they have used the bathroom.
- Clean and disinfect diapering areas and potty chairs after each use. Clean and disinfect bathroom toilets, sinks, and toys at least daily and when soiled (see Section 2).
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

For more information, call Hennepin County Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.

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