
GASTROENTERITIS

An illness characterized by nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever is termed gastroenteritis. Usually gastroenteritis is caused by infection with a virus but occasionally bacteria may be the cause.

Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur separately or all at once. These symptoms often cause great discomfort but usually resolve on their own within a few days. The two most common problems associated with vomiting and diarrhea are dehydration (fluid loss) and loss of important minerals from the body. Therefore, it is important to maintain a proper intake of fluids that contain adequate amounts of minerals. Clear liquids are best and dairy products such as milk are to be avoided. Listed below are items that are good to use;

- * Gatorade
- * Apple juice
- * Pedialyte
- * Gingerale or 7-Up

For control of high fever and muscle ache, tylenol taken as directed is the best choice. After 36-48 hours, if symptoms are resolving, gradual resumption of a regular diet with foods such as toast, crackers, clear soup, etc. is recommended.

By following these instructions a trip to the health clinic can often be avoided. However, if any of the following problems occur, a health practitioner should be consulted as soon as possible;

- * Inability to keep liquids down for more than 24 hours
- * Vomiting blood
- * Bloody diarrhea
- * Worsening or continuous abdominal pain

For further information, contact the University Student Health Services.

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