



First Aid for Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis is an inflammation of your stomach and bowels caused by viruses, or food/water that has been contaminated by bacteria and parasites. It can also break out after consuming food that you are allergic to or as a side effect of medication. It may last between one and ten days. However, usually it isn't dangerous unless you become dehydrated or you belong to a high risk population (children, elderly, people with underlying health conditions).

Symptoms

- Chills and fatigue
- Low grade fever – (37.7°C- 38.2°C) or (99.8°F- 100.8°F)
- Headache and generalized aches in your body
- Non-bloody diarrhea. Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal cramps and pain

Prevention

Viral and bacterial gastroenteritis is commonly spread through contact with an infected person or animal (live poultry), infected objects or surfaces and through preparing or consuming contaminated food.

The best prevention is frequent hand washing.

Consider the following to prevent further contamination:

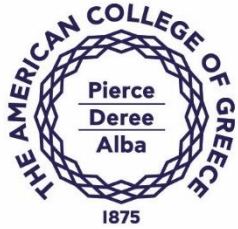
- Avoid preparing food for others and sharing kitchen utensils if you are infected.
- Avoid direct contact with an infected person.
- Do not eat undercooked foods, especially meats and shellfish.



- Wash fruits and salads thoroughly before eating.
- Avoid raw foods, ice or untreated water, especially if travelling in countries with poor hygiene conditions. Drink only from sealed bottles.
- Do not drink unpasteurized fluids, especially milk.
- Clean and sanitize kitchen surfaces and utensils, especially after cooking meat, poultry and seafood.

Care for Gastroenteritis

- Drink plenty of fluids - more than 8-10 glasses every 24 hours. If you lose more fluids than you replace, hospitalization may be needed so that fluids can be replaced intravenously. Sports drinks and other oral rehydration, over-the-counter fluids can help with mild dehydration.
- Over the counter medications to treat nausea, vomiting and diarrhea or fever should be used after consulting doctor. Consider paracetamol (acetaminophen) for fever and pain relief but use cautiously.



Know the Facts

Health

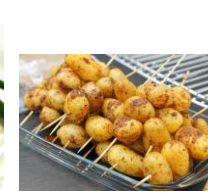


- Snuggle up in a blanket if you are cold or have chills, but take it off if you start to get to warm. You don't need to force yourself to sweat out the fever. If you have experienced a fever, it is generally a good idea to give yourself an extra day off afterwards to recover – and make sure the fever does not come back. Stay home from work or school to rest, if you can.



Diet

- Stop eating for a few hours to let your stomach settle
- Drink plenty of liquids in frequent sips, such as water or tea with sugar to prevent dehydration.
- Ease back into eating. Gradually begin to eat bland, easy to digest foods, such as crackers, toast, gelatin, bananas, apple sauce, rice, plain spaghetti, potatoes and chicken. Stop eating if nausea returns.



Foods to avoid entirely until you are feeling better

- Spicy, fatty or fried foods
- Alcohol
- Caffeinated beverages - they dehydrate your body
- Dried peas or beans
- Raw/ dried vegetables or fruits (except for bananas)
- Milk or milk products (cheese, yogurt, ice cream, or creamed soups)
- Whole grain bread, cereals or bran
- Nuts, seeds, coconut, popcorn
- Nicotine
- Certain medications (ibuprofen, aspirin) as they can make your stomach more upset.

When to call the doctor

- If you suspect that you are becoming dehydrated (decreased urination, dry mouth & throat, dizziness when standing up).
- If you are vomiting and unable to keep fluids down.
- If you have blood in your diarrhea or vomit.
- If you have severe abdominal pain.
- If you have a persistent high fever (>38.3°C).
- If your symptoms are not settling – for example, vomiting for more than 1-2 days, or diarrhea that does not start to settle after 3-4 days.
- If you have an underlying health problem such as diabetes, epilepsy, inflammatory bowel disease or kidney disease.
- If you are pregnant.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance: 166

Poison first aid: 210 779-3777

Pharmacies on duty: 14944

Emergency Hospitals: 14944

European Emergency Number: 112