

## Rotavirus

Rotavirus is a viral infection causing non-bloody diarrhea. This illness is often preceded or accompanied by fever and vomiting, and symptoms may persist for 3 to 8 days. **In severe cases, children may become dehydrated, develop electrolyte abnormalities, or acidosis requiring hospitalization.**

This virus is transmitted by direct or indirect contact with infectious individuals. The virus is present in high titers in the stool of infected patients. The virus can be detected in the stool before the onset of diarrhea and may persist for as long as 21 days after the onset of symptoms. Transmission is by the fecal-oral route. This virus can be found on toys and hard surfaces in childcare centers, and therefore these objects may serve as a mechanism for transmission. This virus is highly contagious. **Rotavirus is the most common cause of diarrhea in children and an important cause of acute gastroenteritis in children attending daycare.** Virtually all children are infected by 3 years of age, and severe infections occur most commonly in infants and children between 14 and 24 months of age.

There is no specific treatment for this virus. Treatment is simply supportive care with oral or intravenous fluids if the child requires hospitalization.

In February of 2006 an oral vaccine was developed. It is recommended that children receive the series of RotaTeq orally at age 2, 4, and 6 months of age.