

# ParentPages

## Protect your child from rotavirus

Did you know that 55,000 children are hospitalized in the United States each year with rotavirus? Rotavirus is most often seen in babies and young children and is the most common cause of severe diarrhea in children. Studies have shown that almost all children will have rotavirus before age 5.

### What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea (loose stools). Babies and children can get sick quickly because they can lose a lot of fluids from the body. A child with vomiting, diarrhea and fever may become dehydrated (dried out) more quickly.

- The virus may be in your child's stool one to three days before he gets sick. He may be sick for up to 10 days.
- People of all ages can get rotavirus, but it is usually worse in children 6 months to 24 months of age.

### What are the signs of rotavirus?

Signs of rotavirus may include:

- Frequent diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Stomach pain
- Cough and runny nose



### How is it spread?

Rotavirus is found in the stool. The virus spreads quickly among children, especially in childcare and school settings. The virus is mostly seen in the winter months but children can get it anytime. To help prevent rotavirus from spreading:

- Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the restroom and changing a diaper.
- Discard dirty diapers right away.
- Clean toys with soap and water.
- Clean hard surfaces with disinfectant.
- Keep your child away from other children if you suspect he may have rotavirus.

### Can rotavirus be prevented?

A rotavirus vaccine can be given to babies in two or three separate doses depending on which brand of vaccine is used. Talk with your child's doctor about the vaccine. This is the best way to protect your child from rotavirus.

- The vaccine is given by mouth.
- It is usually given at 2, 4 and 6 months (if needed) of age.
- It can help prevent the disease about 98 percent of the time.
- Children who receive the vaccine are less likely to get sick and need to go to the hospital.\*

### Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
[www.cdc.gov/rotavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/rotavirus)

Immunization Action Coalition:  
[www.immunize.org/vis/rota\\_06.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/vis/rota_06.pdf)

Kids Health:  
[www.kidshealth.org/parent/infections/stomach/rotavirus.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/infections/stomach/rotavirus.html)

\* Immunization Action Coalition: [www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4217.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4217.pdf)

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## Immunization resources you can trust

There is so much information about vaccines in the news and on the Internet. How do you know the information you find is correct?

### Know the source.

The author should be clearly stated. Contact information also should be listed. Know who paid to have the information published. If a person or company is trying to sell a product, it is hard to know if the information is correct.

### The information should be based in science.

Be sure the information is based on published scientific studies. Look for a date the information was updated or when the study took place to know if it is current.

Always take the information to your child's doctor if you have questions.

Look for information from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Recommendations from this group are trusted. ACIP sets the vaccine schedule that your child's doctor follows.

The following resources also provide reliable information about vaccines and vaccine safety.

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta  
[www.choa.org/vaccines](http://www.choa.org/vaccines)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

Every Child by Two  
[www.ecbt.org](http://www.ecbt.org)

Families Fighting Flu  
[www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org)

Healthfinder  
[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

Immunization Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.cispimmunize.org](http://www.cispimmunize.org)

Immunization Action Coalition  
[www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)

National Network for Immunization Information  
[www.immunizationinfo.org](http://www.immunizationinfo.org)

Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases  
[www.pkids.org](http://www.pkids.org)

Prevent Influenza Now  
[www.preventinfluenza.org](http://www.preventinfluenza.org)

Vaccinate Your Baby  
[www.vaccinateyourbaby.org](http://www.vaccinateyourbaby.org)

What to Expect Guide to Immunizations  
[www.whattoexpect.com/child-vaccinations](http://www.whattoexpect.com/child-vaccinations)



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