

What precautionary measures can I take?

- ?? Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after toilet visits, after changing nappies, before preparing food or drink, after handling raw meat and vegetables, after handling pets and before eating.
- ?? Thoroughly cook all food, especially meat and shellfish.
- ?? Never let raw meat, or its juices, come into contact with cooked meat or any other food that will be eaten without further cooking.
- ?? Use separate chopping boards and utensils for raw meat, cooked meat, vegetables and fruit, and other ready-to-eat foods.
- ?? Always practice good food hygiene.



When can I return to work?

Generally you should stay away from work, school, nursery etc. until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. Treatment is not usually given for most types of viral gastro-enteritis. It is simply a case of letting the body's natural defences deal with the infection.

Normally further samples are not needed, but your Environmental Health Division will give you exact details.

For Further Details Please Contact:

Environmental Health
South Ribble Borough Council
Civic Centre
West Paddock
Leyland
PR25 1DH



☎ ☎ 01772 625342



Viral Gastro-Enteritis

Some Questions and Answers



South Ribble Borough Council



What is it?

Gastro-enteritis is a term used to cover illnesses which cause inflammation of the stomach and intestines believed to be caused by a virus. There are two main types of viruses causing gastro-enteritis in the UK – Small Round Structured Viruses (SRSV's) and Rotaviruses.

These illnesses are very common and Environmental Health staff will only investigate when several people are ill. Isolated cases are not usually investigated.

How do people become infected?

Viruses can be transmitted several ways:

- ?? Contact with individuals with a virus. Infected people can transmit the virus when, breathing, coughing and sneezing.
- ?? The virus can be spread from an infected person who has not washed their hands properly after using the toilet.
- ?? Via minute droplets released into the air following violent vomiting or diarrhoea.
- ?? Contact with surfaces which are contaminated with the virus especially dirty surfaces.
- ?? From raw undercooked food, particularly meat and shellfish.



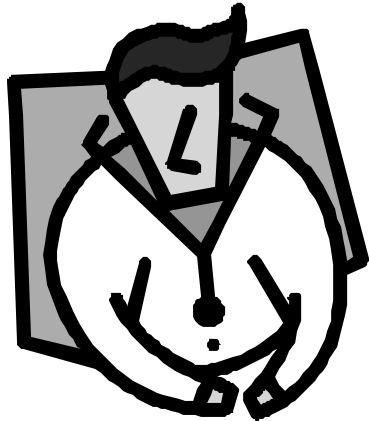
Is there any risk of passing the illness on?

Yes, Viral Gastroenteritis is highly infectious but the risk can be reduced by following some simple advice:

- ? Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after toilet visits, after changing nappies, before preparing food or drink, after handling raw meat and vegetables, handling pets and before eating.
- ? Infants' hands should be washed for them, older children should be supervised.
- ? Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and underclothes separate from the rest of the family's wash. The soiled clothes should be washed on a hot wash.
- ? Do not share hand towels, sponges or flannels with others.
- ? Clean and disinfect the bathroom often especially the toilet seat, bowl, flush handles, taps, wash hand basin and toilet door handle and locks.
- ? Avoid food preparation of any kind until all symptoms have ceased.
- ? Ventilate rooms to the maximum possible extent.



Symptoms and incubation period?



There are several viruses that can cause similar symptoms. The symptoms can include diarrhoea often watery, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain and headache.

Illness usually starts suddenly approximately 24 to 48 hours after contact with an infected case. The symptoms normally last 1 - 2 days which is a lot shorter than symptoms of food poisoning.