

What kind of infection is it?

Adenovirus is a virus. Some types of adenovirus cause diarrhea, other types cause pinkeye, cough, sore throat and other illnesses.

How do people get infected?

- Adenovirus diarrhea is quite common in young children under 5 years of age.
- Adenovirus is spread person to person by contact with stool (poop) from an infected person.
- Poor hand washing after using the bathroom or changing diapers can contaminate food or surfaces.
- Outbreaks have been reported in day care centers.

What are the usual symptoms?

- Illness usually starts 8-10 days after exposure.
- Watery diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, and fever.

How long does it last?

- Typically 4-8 days. The illness can be prolonged, especially in children with weakened immune systems or poor health.

How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. Sometimes anti-nausea medicines or IV fluids may be necessary if you or your child cannot keep down any fluids. Warning signs of dehydration include a dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Because this is a viral infection, antibiotics do not help and may make the diarrhea worse.

Are there possible complications?

- Dehydration is the major complication.
- Diarrhea can be prolonged, especially for children with a weakened immune system.
- Bloody diarrhea can occur but this is rare.
- Prolonged abdominal pain due to swelling of lymph nodes in the abdomen (mesenteric adenitis) can occur.
- Severe complications can occur in transplant patients and others with severely weakened immune systems.

Comments

- Wash hands carefully with soap and water after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, or cleaning up vomit or stool.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with disinfectant or bleach solution (5-25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water).
- People with diarrhea should not prepare food.

Resources

- [CDC webpage](#)