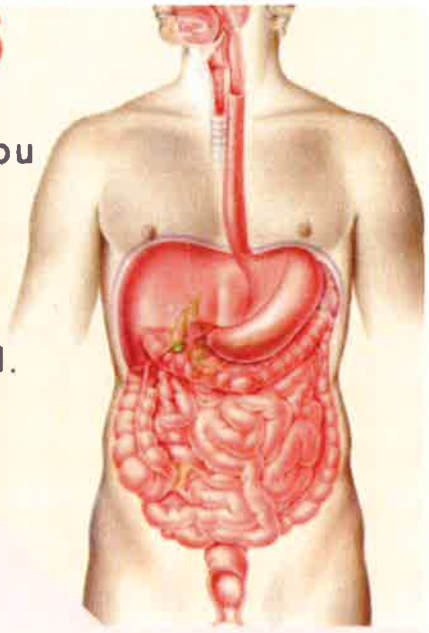
# GASTROENTERITIS

When you have diarrhea and vomiting, you may say you have the "stomach flu." It is called gastroenteritis. Although it may make you feel bad, it's an illness that has nothing to do really with flu. In gastroenteritis, your stomach and intestines are irritated and inflamed. The cause is typically a viral or bacterial infection.



## Symptoms of Gastroenteritis





With gastroenteritis, the main symptoms you probably have are watery diarrhea and vomiting. You might also have stomach pain, cramping, fever, nausea, and a headache. Because of diarrhea and vomiting, you also can become dehydrated. Watch for signs of dehydration, such as dry skin and a dry mouth, feeling lightheaded, and being really thirsty. Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.



## Stomach Flu and Children



Children can get dehydrated quickly, so if your child has the stomach flu, it's important that you look for signs that he is very thirsty or has dry skin or a dry mouth. If you have a baby, look for fewer, drier diapers.

Keep children with gastroenteritis out of day care or school until all symptoms are gone. Check with your doctor before giving your child any medicine. Drugs used to control diarrhea and vomiting aren't usually given to children younger than 5.





To help prevent rotavirus -- the most common cause of stomach flu for children -- there are two vaccines that can be given to infants. Talk to your doctor about the vaccines.

## What Causes Gastroenteritis



Contaminated food or water



Contact with someone who has the virus



Unwashed hands after going to the bathroom or changing a diaper

The most common cause of gastroenteritis is a virus. Gastroenteritis flu can be caused by many different kinds of viruses.

## There are also other unusual ways to get gastroenteritis



Heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, lead, or mercury) in drinking water



Eating a lot of acidic foods, like citrus fruit and tomatoes



Toxins that might be found in certain seafood



Medications such as antibiotics, antacids, laxatives, and chemotherapy drugs

## What are the **Treatment** for Gastroenteritis





