

Gastrointestinal Illnesses

Gastrointestinal illnesses are infections which irritate the stomach and may cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Sometimes called “stomach flu”, it is not caused by the influenza or “flu” virus.

They can be easily spread from person to person. Gastrointestinal illness outbreaks happen year-round but are more common in the colder months.

What to know

- People who are ill do not need to isolate.
- Illness can last for 2 days or more.
- Some people with mild illness may recover on their own.
- Some people become severely ill and may need treatment to recover.

How Gastrointestinal Illnesses spread

- Germs can transfer from the person who is ill by saliva, vomit or poop.
- Even very small amounts can be enough to cause illness.
- The germs can live on surfaces that others touch or use and then get sick.
- This can be through food and drink, sharing objects like cigarettes or pipes, surfaces that are not cleaned enough or sex activities that involve the anus.

Prevention



WASH
HANDS



CLEAN
SURFACES



HANDLE
FOOD SAFELY



SHOWER
REGULARLY

Symptoms



Stomach
cramps



Diarrhea



Vomiting



Fever

What to do if you are sick



See a health-care provider if you have bloody diarrhea, or severe diarrhea.

Drink plenty of clear fluids such as water or broth.



Wash your hands well and often with soap and warm water, especially after using the washroom, and before eating or preparing food and drinks.

A health-care provider may recommend testing to find out if you need antibiotic treatment. Always take your medications as prescribed and complete the full course of your prescription.



Separate soiled laundry and avoid shaking it out. Wash soiled laundry and bedding with regular detergent and hot water, followed by machine drying.

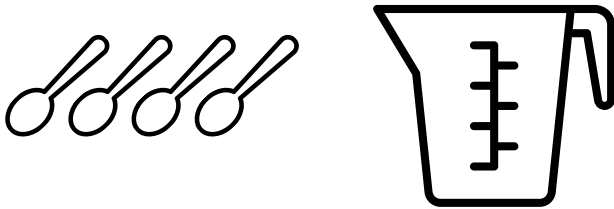
If you work or volunteer in a food setting, **do not work** until you are symptom-free for at least **48 hours**.



Cleaning Guidelines

REMEMBER, CLEAN FIRST, THEN DISINFECT

Routine cleaning and disinfection



4 teaspoons of bleach in one litre of water.

For regular cleaning, wash hard surfaces with an all-purpose cleaner and hot water. Then disinfect by using a solution of 4 teaspoons of household bleach mixed with 1 litre of water. Then air dry.

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, common spaces, and washrooms at least **three times a day**.



Spill Cleanup Kits

Have spill kits available for staff, volunteers, and residents to use for cleaning up vomit or stool. Spill kits should include:

- Garbage bags and tape for closing
- Disposable gloves, Paper towels, Cloth, Detergent
- Bleach or disinfectant (1 cup bleach + 10 cups water)
- Bucket & Mop

NOTE: Make sure to clean and disinfect mops, cloths, and brushes after being used to clean body fluid spills.

Remind everyone to wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Washrooms

Make sure washrooms are clean, available and have toilet paper, soap, paper towels, and sinks with hot and cold running water.



If washrooms must be shared, provide wipes to people who are sick and encourage them to wipe down the washroom after use.