Viral gastroenteritis, often called stomach flu, is an inflammation of your stomach and intestines.

Characteristic signs and symptoms include:

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Low-grade fever (sometimes)

Depending on the cause of the inflammation, symptoms may last from one day to more than a week.

**Gastroenteritis: First aid**  By Mayo Clinic Staff

If you suspect gastroenteritis in yourself:

- **Stop eating for a few hours** to let your stomach settle.
- **Drink plenty of liquids**, such as a sports drink or water, to prevent dehydration. If you have trouble tolerating liquids, take them in frequent sips. Make sure that you're urinating normally and that your urine is light and clear — not dark. Infrequent passage of dark urine is a sign of dehydration. Dizziness and lightheadedness also are signs of dehydration. If any of these signs and symptoms occur and you can't drink enough fluids, seek medical attention.
- **Ease back into eating.** Gradually begin to eat bland, easy-to-digest foods, such as soda crackers, toast, gelatin, bananas, rice and chicken. Stop eating if your nausea returns. Avoid milk and dairy products, caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and fatty or highly seasoned foods for a few days.
- **Consider acetaminophen** (Tylenol, others) for relief of discomfort, unless you have liver disease.
- **Get plenty of rest.** The illness and dehydration can make you weak and tired.

Get medical help if:

- Vomiting persists more than two days
- Diarrhea persists more than several days
- Diarrhea turns bloody
- Fever is 101 F (38.3 C) or higher
- Lightheadedness or fainting occurs with standing
- Confusion develops
- Worrisome abdominal pain develops

**Prevention is your best Defense!**

- **Wash your hands frequently throughout the day.** Especially after using the bathroom and before eating!!
- **If you become sick, stay home!** Do NOT go to the dining hall, social events, work or class. Most cases resolve in 1-2 days. (The Hope Health Center does not write notes for illnesses lasting only a day or two.) **Do call us for an appointment if you have any of the concerns listed above!**
• After you are ill, wipe down your personal space and items with a viral-cidal agent (like Lysol). Don’t forget door knobs, ID's, cell phones, key boards and things you touch frequently!

**Report your illness so we can monitor the spread!** Send an email to the Hope Health Center with the following information:

[healthcenter@hope.edu](mailto:healthcenter@hope.edu)

• Your name
• Where you live
• Symptoms you are having, or have had
• Date symptoms started and stopped

Call the Health Center at 616-395-7585 if you have any questions or concerns.