



QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

What is Gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (gas-tro-en-ter-i-tis) is an infection in the stomach and intestine. It is very common. Common names for gastroenteritis are:

- Stomach flu
- Traveler's diarrhea
- Food poisoning

What are the signs of Gastroenteritis?

- Vomiting
- Watery stools or bowel movements (diarrhea)
- Stomach pains, including cramps, bloating and rumbling.
- Fever
- Weakness
- Always feeling tired
- Not wanting to eat

What are the causes of Gastroenteritis?

Viruses are the most common cause of Gastroenteritis. Some **germs (bacteria)** can also cause it. E.Coli is the best known of these germs.

Viruses and germs can be found in unclean water or foods. Gastroenteritis is easily passed from person to person. It can be very serious if it is caused by germs (bacteria). Other causes include:

- Food allergies
- Poisonous mushrooms or plants
- Reaction to antibiotics

What are the tests for Gastroenteritis?

Samples of stool (BM) or blood are sent to a lab for testing

What are the treatments for Gastroenteritis?

- Bed rest
- Taking medicine to stop vomiting
- Taking medicine to stop diarrhea
- Antibiotics, **if caused by germs**
- Drinking plenty of liquids, such as:
 - Caffeine-free tea
 - Clear soup
 - Ginger ale
 - Gatorade
- Suck on ice chips if you cannot keep liquids down.
- Eat soft foods. Try the **BRAT** diet, which includes **B**ananas, **R**ice, **A**pplesauce and dry **T**oast (no butter).
- Do not drink milk or eat cheese, butter or yogurt.
- Do not eat foods that are spicy, greasy or high in fiber, such as raw fruits or vegetables.
- Do not drink liquids that have caffeine, such as regular tea, coffee or soft drinks.
- Do not drink beer, wine or any other type of alcohol.

Tips to avoid Gastroenteritis

- When traveling, follow these rules:
 - Do not eat fresh fruits and vegetables from street markets.
 - Drink only bottled water.
- **Wash your hands before preparing food and eating.**
- **Wash your hands after using the bathroom.**
- Cook meats and seafood to well done.
- Keep foods that quickly spoil in the refrigerator, including:
 - Meats
 - Fish and other seafood
 - Eggs and milk
 - Dishes made with mayonnaise
 - Leftovers
- Wash everything that has touched food in warm, soapy water after each use.
- Keep the house clean and free of flies and cockroaches

How can I find a Doctor?

St. Vincent Charity Hospital has doctors who have special training in the treatment of Gastroenteritis and other stomach problems. To contact one of our doctors, please call:

Physician Referral Line at 1.800.223.8662

Visit our Web site at www.stvincentcharity.com.

**St. Vincent Charity Hospital
Pointe**

2351 East 22nd Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

216.861.6200

TTY: Ohio Relay 1.800.750.0750

The HealthCare Center at Saint Luke's

11201 Shaker Boulevard

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

216.721.6900

Reading Health, a program of Project: LEARN, assisted in the writing of this material under a grant from the Sisters of Charity Foundation: March 2008



**ST. VINCENT CHARITY
MEDICAL CENTER**

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

