

# Gastroenteritis (aka “The stomach flu”)



## Information about this common GI illness.

**WHAT IS IT?** Gastroenteritis is an irritation and inflammation of the digestive tract. In the U.S. it is second only to the common cold in frequency of occurrence. Although often called the “stomach flu,” it is not caused by the influenza virus (which is a respiratory virus) and it affects the intestines rather than the stomach itself.

The usual causes of gastroenteritis are viruses, parasites, and occasionally bacteria.



These microbes can easily be passed to others, so it is important to wash your hands thoroughly if you are sick and especially before preparing food or after using the bathroom.

The most common symptoms of acute gastroenteritis are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, cramps, headache (from fluid loss), low-grade fever, and muscle aches.

The duration of symptoms is brief, usually only 24-48 hours. If the illness is caused by a bacteria, the symptoms may be more severe and last for several days. Sometimes laboratory tests are required for proper diagnosis and treatment of certain intestinal illnesses.

**HOW SERIOUS IS IT?** If you are a normal healthy adult, a case of gastroenteritis is unpleasant, but not dangerous. However, prolonged bouts of vomiting and/or diarrhea can lead to dehydration (low on fluids) and disruption of important chemical functions in the cells. If dehydration becomes

severe, a person may develop an irregular heart beat or kidney failure. If you have a chronic disease like diabetes, you may be at greater risk of developing complications.

### HOW DO I TREAT IT?

Stay at home or in your room and rest until all of your symptoms subside.

Allow your stomach and intestines to rest; do not eat any solid foods at first.

Start by sipping small amounts of water or suck on ice chips if still vomiting.

After 4-8 hours, if clear liquids are tolerated, progress to soft mildly flavored foods like toast, broth, apples, bananas, rice or saltines.

Gradually increase the amount and types of food you eat over the next couple of days. Avoid heavy or spicy foods for several days to allow your intestines to recover.

## What can my health care provider do?

Your health care provider can take a history of your illness, measure your vital signs and perform a focused examination to make sure you are not in danger of becoming dehydrated.

Because the symptoms of gastroenteritis are usually self-limiting (go away on

their own), no special treatment is needed. Medications are not usually prescribed unless the vomiting is severe and unrelenting, or if the diarrhea has lasted more than 2-3 days.

Some sick students may not be able to adequately care for themselves or drink

enough fluids. In such cases a hospital referral may be needed for IV fluids and medication.

Symptoms of dehydration include excessive thirst, dry mouth, dark yellow urine, low urine output, increased heart rate, severe weakness, dizziness, or feeling lightheaded.

### CLEAR LIQUIDS

- WATER
- APPLE JUICE
- GRAPE JUICE
- GINGER ALE
- SEVEN-UP
- WEAK TEA
- FRUIT PUNCH
- GATORADE
- JELL-O
- POPSICLES

### CALL HEALTH SERVICES ASAP IF:

You are unable to keep any liquids down after 24 hours of being ill.

You have been vomiting for more than two days or are vomiting blood.

You have bloody diarrhea.

You have a fever over 101° F.

You have symptoms of dehydration.

You have pain that is localized, especially to the right lower abdomen.

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## Inside Story Headline



Caption describing picture or graphic.

This story can fit 150-200 words.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new product.

You can also research articles or find “filler” articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also

be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you’re finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

“TO CATCH THE READER’S ATTENTION, PLACE AN INTERESTING SENTENCE OR QUOTE FROM THE STORY HERE.”

## Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your

customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice

column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

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This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you’re trying to

convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.

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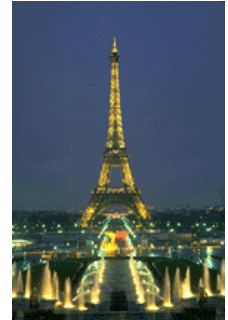
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**Your business tag line here.**

ECSU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

Primary Business Address  
Your Address Line 2  
Your Address Line 3  
Your Address Line 4  
Phone: 555-555-5555  
Fax: 555-555-5555  
E-mail: someone@example.com

*This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.*

*It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.*

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## We're on the Web!

example.com

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## Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organi-

zation is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.



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