

ADVICE TO A FAMILY WITH A CASE OF INTESTINAL INFECTION

The following notes are intended as a guide to persons who are suffering with or caring for a case of gastro- enteritis, probably of bacterial or viral origin.

DOCTOR NOTIFICATION

If you visit your GP or local hospital and it is suspected you have gastro- enteritis, then your GP has a legal duty to notify this Department.

An investigating officer may contact you to give advice,

•If you feel unwell this does not necessarily mean that you are suffering from any infection. If you are concerned, then call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit your family doctor

•You should contact your doctor if you become ill after accidentally swallowing contaminated water or mud, particularly if you develop diarrhoea, fever or abdominal pain within 10 days of being in contact with floodwater or sewage.

WHERE DID I GET THE ILLNESS?

The sources of gastro- enteritis illness may be due to water borne source:-

- i) Contaminated polluted drinking water.
- ii) Contact with dirty contaminated water.
- iii) Human - the organisms which causes these illnesses can be transmitted from person to person as they are excreted in the faeces.

SYMPTOMS

There are a variety of symptoms including diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains, fever, headaches or giddiness. You may experience one, or more of these symptoms depending on which infection you have.

HOW CAN I PREVENT MY FAMILY FROM BECOMING ILL?

The infection can be spread from person to person by not washing hands properly after using the toilet, by contaminated food or by hand to mouth transfer from contaminated materials.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Good personal hygiene will help to ensure you do not pass the infection on to your family or close friends. Ensure that everyone washes their hands thoroughly using soap and warm water after visiting the toilet, nappy changing, handling pets and always before preparing any foods. Supervise children wherever possible.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Soiled clothing and bed linen should be washed in a domestic washing machine in a 'hot' cycle. If heavily soiled, as much faecal matter as possible should be carefully removed and then flushed away in a toilet. It is recommended that such items are soaked in a household disinfectant solution before washing in order to reduce contamination. Always thoroughly wash hands after handling soiled laundry.

Toilet seat, rim, bowl, flush handles, toilet door handle and bathroom taps must be disinfected after use with steriliser, disinfectant or sanitiser such as Milton, Domestos or Anti-bacterial spray. Pour neat steriliser around toilet bowl at night and flush in morning.

Toys or other similar articles which are normally shared by children within the household should be separated during the period of infection, so that otherwise healthy children do not play with the same toys as the patient. Toys used by the patient should be disinfected (if possible) by wiping with a cloth containing a mild disinfectant and then rinsing with clean water before they are handled by the other children.

WHERE TO FIND US AND WHO TO CONTACT



For further information please contact:

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Food and Health & Safety Team
Public Health & Protection Division
Ty Elai, Dinas Isaf East
Williamstown, Tonypanydy CF40 1NY

Tel: 01443 425001

Food.healthandsafety@rctcbc.gov.uk

CONTACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE

- i) For most gastro- enteritis type infections segregation or quarantining of patients is not usually necessary, except in cases of highly infectious diseases, but it is still wise not to let the patient mix closely with the very young or elderly as they can be more susceptible to picking up an infection. Playing with children should be restricted as much as possible and play with children outside of the immediate family is not advisable until the patient has recovered from their symptoms. Once the symptoms have cleared up, normal social contact can usually be resumed within a few days.

WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK, NURSERY OR SCHOOL?

- ii) It may be necessary to temporarily exclude infected children from playgroups, nurseries, childminders or school and certain other infected persons from work, e.g. food handlers, nursery workers, nurses or carers for the elderly, etc. until they have been completely recovered for 48 hours, or sometimes clear faecal specimens (negative result) are required. An officer of the Department will inform you when you are able to resume these activities.