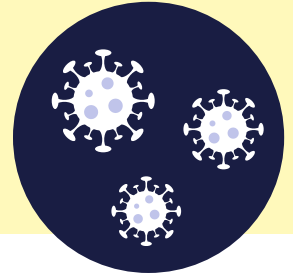


Viral Gastroenteritis (Gastro) at your childcare/preschool

Cases of gastroenteritis have been detected amongst attendees of your childcare/preschool facility. This is likely due to a viral infection. Gastroenteritis is a common illness that spreads easily between people. Therefore, please note the following general advice:

- Please monitor for symptoms of gastroenteritis in your child.
- If your child has symptoms of gastroenteritis or you think they might have gastroenteritis, they should not attend childcare/preschool.
- Children with symptoms of gastroenteritis must not attend childcare/preschool until 48 hours after the symptoms have resolved.



What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (gastro) is an illness that causes abdominal cramps, diarrhoea and vomiting. There are different causes of gastroenteritis, although the most common cause is a viral infection. In most cases, gastroenteritis symptoms resolve on their own within a few days. However, sometimes people with gastroenteritis can become dehydrated and may need to go to hospital to get fluids.

Gastroenteritis is **highly contagious**, and outbreaks (where multiple children become unwell) are common in childcare/preschool settings when the illness spreads from infected children to others.

It is important to limit the spread of gastroenteritis amongst children to prevent others from becoming unwell or spreading the illness to other family members who may be susceptible to severe illness (e.g. those with preexisting health conditions).

What you need to do:

Please monitor your child for symptoms of gastroenteritis. These may include:



Feeling unwell, and not wanting to eat or drink



Vomiting



Diarrhoea



Stomach pain



Fever

What to do if your child develops symptoms of gastroenteritis

- If symptoms develop, please keep your child at home to stop gastroenteritis from spreading to others. Make sure they drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Children with gastroenteritis must not attend childcare/kindergarten **until 48 hours after** their symptoms have stopped. This exclusion period is legislated in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019* and your childcare/preschool facility is required to enforce it.
- If the centre calls you to pick up your child due to gastroenteritis symptoms, please pick up your child as soon as possible.
- Contact your doctor or healthcare centre and seek medical review of your child if you are concerned about them.

How to prevent gastroenteritis



Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after going to the toilet or changing nappies, and before preparing food or eating. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are not effective against the viruses that cause gastroenteritis.



Clean the kitchen (counters and taps), toys, and nappy change tables frequently.



Keep your child away from others until 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped.



Clean the toilet and bathroom regularly (especially the toilet seat, door handles and taps).

Need more information?

For more information, please visit:



[Gastroenteritis in children -
Better Health Channel](#)



[Royal Children's Hospital
\(RCH\) - Gastroenteritis](#)

Alternatively, you can contact the North Eastern Public Health Unit's (NEPHU) Health Protection Branch at healthprotection.nephu@austin.org.au