

ROTAVIRUS



UNDERSTANDING ROTAVIRUS

WHAT IS ROTAVIRUS

Rotavirus is most common in children under the age of 5 years and is easily transmitted and very contagious.¹ It is responsible for up to 500 000 diarrhoeal deaths/year, worldwide.²

The virus enters the body through the mouth and viral replication occurs in the villous epithelium of the small intestine.² Infection may lead to isotonic diarrhoea.²

Rotavirus is very stable and may remain viable for weeks or months if not disinfected.² Improved sanitation alone is not sufficient to prevent rotavirus infection.²

Extra precaution should be taken during winter and spring as more infections occur during this time of the year.¹

CLINICAL FEATURES

- Short incubation period. (> 48 hours)² The first infection after age of 3 months is generally the most severe.²
- Rotavirus may be asymptomatic or can result in severe dehydrating diarrhoea with fever (39 °C) and vomiting.^{1,2}
- Gastrointestinal symptoms generally resolve in 3 to 7 days.²
- Laboratory testing is required to confirm rotavirus infection.²



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SYMPTOMS AND COMPLICATIONS

- Vomiting.
- Severe fatigue.
- High fever.
- Irritability.
- Dehydration.
- Abdominal pain.¹

Rotavirus infection in babies and young children can lead to:

- Severe diarrhoea.
- Dehydration.
- Electrolyte imbalance.
- Metabolic acidosis.²

ROTAVIRUS PREVENTION

The rotavirus vaccine is given in oral form.¹

Vaccination prevents:

- 74 %-87 % of any rotavirus gastroenteritis.²
- 85 %-98 % severe gastroenteritis.²

Vaccination significantly reduced physician visits for diarrhoea, and reduced rotavirus-related hospitalization.²

SA VACCINATION SCHEDULE

Vaccination is recommended at 6, 10* and 14 weeks and should not be given after 32 weeks.^(1,3,4)

*Vaccine type dependent.

Five predominant strains:

- (G1-G4, G9) accounted for 90 % of isolates.²
- G1 strain accounts for most of infections. (75 %)²

DID YOU KNOW?

Immunocompromised children may experience severe or prolonged rotavirus gastroenteritis and may have evidence of abnormalities in multiple organ systems, particularly the kidney and liver.²

Please note: This is an education information leaflet only and should not be used for diagnosis. For more information on Rotavirus, consult your healthcare professional.

References

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4. 2021 PMG schedule.

