



The BUZZ

January 2009

The Ins, Outs, Ups, and Downs of Gastroenteritis

Ugh. It almost makes you nauseous thinking about it. That awful, horrible way you feel when you have gastroenteritis, a.k.a the "stomach flu."



Gastroenteritis is an upset stomach with nausea and vomiting and is sometimes accompanied by diarrhea or fever. It is caused by viruses or bacteria that are spread through contaminated food or through person to person contact, such as sharing utensils, towels and other personal items. Frequent hand washing, once again, is one of the best ways to prevent the illness.

If you do have gastroenteritis, take heart - it will likely pass within a couple of days. In the meantime, it's important to make sure you don't get dehydrated. When you throw up a lot or have diarrhea you lose lots of water and it's easy to become dehydrated. Drink small amounts, even sips, of clear liquids frequently to protect against this. When you are ready to try solid food, go slowly and think boring (bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast). Eating greasy, spicy foods too soon will likely prompt a setback and another run to the bathroom.

Stay Healthy this Winter

Even the hardiest of Minnesotans is likely to admit that staying healthy is more difficult in the winter. In addition to the cold, ice, and snow our infamous winters bring challenges to health and wellness. There are, however, simple things everyone can do to be healthier this winter.

Wash your hands! Washing hands with soap and water or using a hand sanitizer before eating or after touching objects others have touched (desks, keyboards, etc.) is the number one way to prevent illness in the winter... or any other season.

Protect your skin. The temperature isn't the only thing that drops in the winter - so does the humidity. Dry skin is a common problem during the winter. Not only does dry, cracked skin feel uncomfortable, it is more susceptible to infection. Using a mild soap and warm, not hot, water when bathing will help maintain the skin's natural oils and retain moisture. Applying a good moisturizer immediately after bathing also helps. Be sure to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water and non-alcoholic beverages and don't forget to protect your lips by using lip balm.

Let the sun shine in. Sunlight is important for emotional and physical health. It helps symptoms of depression associated with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and it generally brightens our mood. Sunlight is also an excellent source of Vitamin D, which is crucial to healthy bones. When wind chill temperatures are dangerously low, it's not easy to get the sunlight we need. But on days when the temperature is milder and the sun is shining, try to get a few minutes of sunlight on a small area of bare skin, such as the hands or face. Even this little bit will make a big difference!

Hit a High Note

Student Success Day is Thursday, February 5th.



This is a great day to meet with your instructors or attend information sessions. There are even online sessions!

Want more information? Visit www.rctc.edu/successday.

"A snowflake is one of God's most fragile creations, but look what they can do when they stick together." ~ Unknown