



# NOTES from NURSING



## **Some Healthy Tips for a Happy New Year!**

Many times when families gather together for holidays and trips, nasty critters and infections come along too. Learning causes and prevention tips will help you have a more pleasant gathering.

## **Norovirus and Rotavirus**

Norovirus and Rotavirus are two highly contagious viral infections that cause the “stomach flu” or gastroenteritis.

The symptoms of **norovirus** illness usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people also have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general feeling of tiredness.

The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting only about 1-2 days. Children experience more vomiting than adults do.

People can become infected with the virus in several ways:

- ☀ Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with the virus
- ☀ Touching surfaces or objects contaminated and then placing their hand in their mouth
- ☀ Having direct contact with a person who is infected

**People infected with the norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin to feel ill until at least 3 days after recovery.**

**Rotavirus** is another virus causing vomiting, watery diarrhea, fever, and abdominal pain. In children, the diarrhea is severe and can last 3-8 days. The incubation period for rotavirus is approximately two days.

Rotavirus is spread through oral contact with fecal matter. It can occur through contaminated water, or food, or contact with contaminated surfaces. It is spread when people touch a contaminated item and put their hands or the item in their mouth.

The symptoms can last 3 to 10 days; however, people are considered contagious for 10 - 12 days after the onset of the diarrhea.

Both the **norovirus** and **rotavirus** can cause severe dehydration, especially in young children.

Signs of dehydration include irritability, severe tiredness, sunken eyes, dry mouth and tongue, and decreased urination.

These signs in children require children to be seen by a physician and sometimes hospitalization.

There is no specific medicine to treat either of these viruses. Drinking plenty of fluids can help reduce the chance of dehydration.

Children should stay home until they are **completely** recovered.

## **Head Lice - Pediculosis**

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the human head. Color varies from light to dark tan. They do not jump or fly, but crawl from hair to hair and feed on blood from scalp bites.

Anyone can get head lice. It is passed from one person to another in a number of ways:

- ✓ Head to head contact is the most common way.
- ✓ Sharing items like combs, brushes, towels, bedding, hats, coats, scarves, ribbons or barrettes.
- ✓ Placing heads on furniture, rugs, or car seats recently used by someone with lice.

The person is contagious until lice and nits are destroyed. Head lice do not spread illness or disease.

There are several prescription and over-the-counter head lice products available through your healthcare provider or drugstore.

Students must have all Nits removed before returning to school and be checked by trained personnel before returning to class.

## **Happy Healthy New Year!**

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