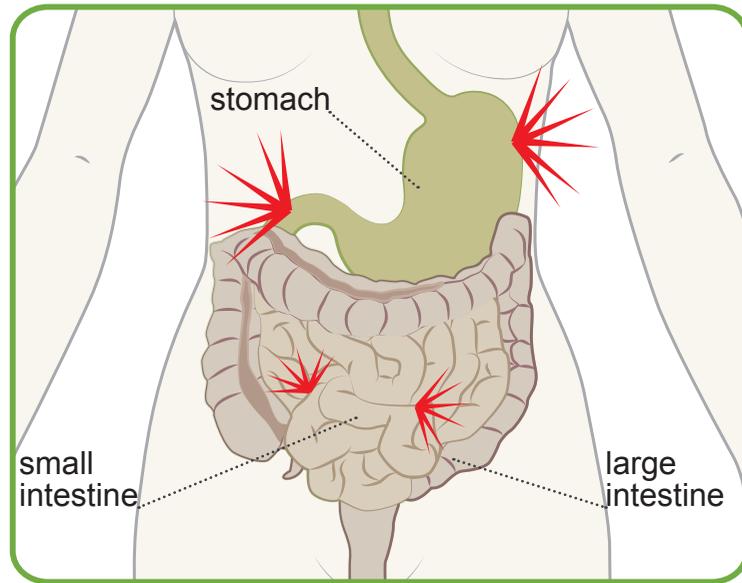


Gastroenteritis and Food Poisoning



 Office d'éducation des patients du CUSM
MUHC Patient Education Office



This material is also available on the MUHC Health Education Collection (<http://infotheque.muhc.ca/>) MUHC Patient Education Office (www.muhcpatienteducation.ca).

This material was developed by the McGill University Health Centre Emergency Department.

What is wrong?

Gastroenteritis is an irritation of the stomach and intestines usually caused by a virus. The infection can lead to diarrhea and vomiting. It is sometimes called the “stomach flu”.

Food poisoning is caused by eating contaminated food.

What should I do at home?

- ▶ Rest your body and stomach.
- ▶ Drink fluids to keep hydrated. Take small sips of water frequently. Avoid drinking large amounts at one time as this can cause vomiting.
- ▶ Try to drink water, sports drinks, oral rehydration solutions, broth or soup.
- ▶ Avoid fruit juices, sugary drinks, caffeinated drinks or dairy products which can make diarrhea worse.
- ▶ When you start to feel better, begin to eat gradually in small amounts.
- ▶ Do not share drinks or utensils, and wash hands often to prevent spreading the infection to other people.
- ▶ Your doctor may have prescribed some medication. Take them as prescribed.

When am I going to feel better?

The illness can last from 1 to 10 days.

When should I come back to the Emergency Department?

You should return right away if you:

- ▶ Can't keep fluids down for 24 hours
- ▶ Vomit blood
- ▶ Vomit for more than 2 days
- ▶ Have bloody diarrhea or black stool
- ▶ Have a fever above 38°C/100.4°F for more than 2 days
- ▶ Have worsening abdominal pain
- ▶ Feel very tired or have trouble getting up
- ▶ Have little or no urine

Notes