

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Melissa Propp, RN, 308-345-4223

Preventing Rotavirus Infections

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages parents to know if their child is protected from rotavirus. Rotavirus is a very contagious virus that causes severe diarrhea. It is most common in babies and young children but can affect older children and adults.

“We see rotavirus most often in the winter and spring months,” explains Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager at SWNPHD. “It spreads easily with babies and young kids always putting things in their mouths at home and at daycares, so good cleaning habits are really important.”

This virus spreads when people who are sick with this illness pass the virus on to others in their poop. Eating food that is contaminated with the virus, putting unwashed hands in the mouth, or touching objects or surfaces then putting hands in the mouth are ways that this virus can spread. Symptoms of rotavirus usually start 2 days after a person has been exposed, and symptoms can last 3 to 8 days.

Signs and symptoms of Rotavirus:

- Severe watery diarrhea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain

Dehydration can happen in young children and can be very serious or even lead to death. If your child or anyone you know develops signs of dehydration seek medical attention immediately.

Signs of Dehydration:

- Crying with few or no tears
- Decrease in wet diapers or less need to pee
- Unusual fussiness or sleepiness
- Dry mouth and throat
- Increased thirst

Parents and caregivers can help prevent the spread of rotavirus by washing their hands well after every diaper change, washing hands before touching food, and washing children’s hands often, especially before they eat.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the best way to protect babies and children from rotavirus is have them get the rotavirus vaccine. Babies usually receive rotavirus vaccine at their Well Child doctor visits at 2,4 and 6 months, depending on the brand of vaccine.

If you are unsure if your child is up to date on their Rotavirus vaccines, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the public health nurse at SWNPHD. You can also look up your shot records in the Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS) at nesiis-dhhs-prod.ne.gov.

For more information on rotavirus, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at swhealth.ne.gov.

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