

What is Gastroenteritis?

LORRIN

Okay, I'll bite. What's this?

DANIEL

I call this one "Stomach Flu."

DANIEL

Don't you get it? This bird "Enza" flew in and hit him in the stomach. IN FLEW ENZA.

(We hear crickets chirping.)

LORRIN

Hmmm...I think we've got a problem. First of all, what people often call "stomach flu" isn't really influenza.

DANIEL

It isn't?

LORRIN

No. Influenza is an infection mainly of your nose, mouth, throat, and lungs caused by the influenza virus. It can make you feel bad all over and sometimes it might cause stomach problems, too. But, really, what people often call "stomach flu" is actually what doctors call "gastroenteritis." That's because it is an infection of the "Gastrointestinal" or "GI" system. That's the system that handles food, including your stomach and intestines.

DANIEL

GEE, I can see why they say GI instead of gastrointementionabable.

LORRIN

A GI infection, or gastroenteritis, is an infection in your stomach and small intestines. Usually, it causes really bad diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach cramps.

DANIEL

Diarrhea is when you have really loose, watery poop. And it sounds like this...

LORRIN

Don't you dare!

What is Gastroenteritis?

LORRIN

Gastroenteritis, which some people just call a “stomach bug,” can be caused by a wide range of germs, like bacteria, viruses, parasites, and protozoa.

DANIEL

You can get a stomach bug from germs in food that hasn’t been cooked or cleaned properly. Undercooked or re-heated meat, seafood, milk and other dairy products, and even baked goods, can carry the germs that could make you sick.

LORRIN

Drinking water with germs in it, called “contaminated” water, is also a common way to get a stomach bug. Swimming in or drinking contaminated water from springs, ponds, or rivers could make you sick.

LORRIN

If you get a stomach bug, you’ll probably have stomach cramps and throw up...

DANIEL

...and loose poop!...er, I mean, diarrhea, that’s really yucky...

LORRIN

And you may get a fever.

LORRIN

The good news is that you should get better pretty fast.

LORRIN

Once you’re not throwing up any more, your doctor or parents may give you a special drink made to help you get back to normal faster. It’s called an “oral rehydration solution.”

DANIEL

It’s a special drink to help get the liquid, salts, and sugars in your body back to normal faster.

LORRIN

But, don’t drink too fast!

DANIEL

You’ll want to start with small sips at first, so that you don’t upset your stomach again.

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Once you can drink without throwing up, then you should try to eat, but simple, easy food, like applesauce, chicken soup, crackers...and not too much at once. Once you're eating OK, and if you have diarrhea, yogurt might help make your poop normal again.

LORRIN

Remember; go slow as you try to eat more. It sounds funny, but it's true: The slower you go, the faster you'll get there.

DANIEL

Yeah. Wait....huh?