

# Infectious gastroenteritis

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Infectious gastroenteritis is an infection caused by pathogenic microorganisms such as viruses and bacteria. It is often prevalent in winter and is often caused by “norovirus” or “rotavirus”. The main symptoms are abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, etc., but sometimes it may be accompanied by headache, chills, muscle pain, and fatigue.

The incubation period of norovirus is from 1 to 2 days, and the route of infection to human is mainly oral. It is said that the infection is caused by raw or undercooked meals such as contaminated oysters, shellfishes, etc., from vomits and stool of infected persons and articles that are directly contaminated. In general, if the food is heated, the virus will be completely inactivated, so there is no problem, but it is possible to infect foods that are not cooked, such as raw ingredients and salads made by unwashed bare hands, kitchen knives, cutting boards, etc. Therefore, raw foods, including salads, which are made by contaminated hands, knives, and chopping boards, would have a possibility of infectious sources.

To prevent infection, it is important to wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water before cooking and eating, and after the toilet. Also, when cooking shellfishes, it is important to cook thoroughly by heating to over 85 degrees for 1 minute or more.

Usually, symptomatic and supportive therapies, such as medicine, probiotics, and antifebrile medicines, are widely used in the world; unfortunately, there are no effective treatments to reduce the growth of noroviruses.

If you have any questions, please visit Health Care Center, TUFFS.

