
Adenoviruses

What is it?

Adenoviruses are a group of viruses that infect the membranes (tissue linings) of the respiratory tract, the eyes, the intestines, and the urinary tract. They account for approximately three to five per cent of acute respiratory infections in children and up to two per cent in adults. Illnesses due to adenoviruses can occur throughout the year, but are more common in late winter, spring and early summer. There are more than 50 subtypes of adenoviruses.

What are the symptoms?

Depending on which part of the body is affected, the signs and symptoms of adenovirus infection vary. Respiratory tract – fever, flu-like symptoms, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, and cough (dry and harsh, and can resemble whooping cough or pertussis). Adenovirus often affects the lower respiratory tract, causing bronchiolitis, croup or viral pneumonia.

Gastrointestinal – watery diarrhea, vomiting, headache, fever and abdominal cramps.

Other – conjunctivitis

Who is at risk?

Adenovirus can affect anyone. People with weakened immune systems are especially susceptible to severe complications of adenovirus infection.

When do symptoms start?

Five to 10 days after coming in contact with the virus

When is it contagious?

Adenovirus is contagious as long as symptoms are present.

How does it spread?

Adenovirus can spread person to person through direct contact, airborne transmission, droplet transmission and fecal-oral transmission.

How is it treated?

There is no treatment for adenoviral infections. Your doctor may suggest treating the symptoms with over-the-counter medications.

How can the spread of Adenovirus be reduced?

Frequent handwashing, keeping shared surfaces such as countertops and toys clean, and covering your mouth when you cough and sneeze can all prevent the spread of adenovirus.

What should I do if I get sick with Adenovirus?

Stay home if you are ill, and follow the above measures to prevent the spread of infection. Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids.

