

## BACKGROUND

Adenoviruses are common viruses that cause a multitude of illness from cold-like symptoms to gastrointestinal symptoms.

## WHO DOES THE ISSUE IMPACT?

You can get an adenovirus infection at any age. People with weakened immune systems, or existing respiratory or cardiac disease, are at higher risk of developing severe illness from an adenovirus infection.

## HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

Adenoviruses are usually spread from an infected person to others through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands; coughing or sneezing; and touching an object or surface with adenoviruses on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

Some adenoviruses can spread through an infected person's stool, for example, during diaper changing. Adenovirus can also spread through the water, such as a pool, but this is less common.

Sometimes the virus can be shed (released from the body) for a long time after a person recovers from an adenovirus infection, especially among people who have weakened immune systems. This virus usually occurs without any symptoms; during virus shedding the person can still spread adenovirus to other people.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Adenoviruses can cause mild to severe illness, though serious illness is less common.

Illnesses include:

- Common cold;
- Sore throat;
- Bronchitis;
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs);
- Diarrhea;
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis);
- Fever;
- Bladder inflammation or infection;
- Inflammation of stomach and intestines; and
- Neurologic disease (conditions that affect the brain and spinal cord.)

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## HOW CAN YOU TREAT IT?

There is no specific treatment for people with adenovirus infection. Most adenovirus infections are mild and may require only care to help relieve symptoms.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can protect yourself and others from adenoviruses and other respiratory illnesses by following a few simple steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water (see [CDC's Clean Hands Save Lives!](#));
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; and
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

If you're sick you can help protect others by:

- Staying home when you are sick;
- Covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing;
- Not sharing cups and eating utensils with others;
- Refraining from kissing others; and
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom. Frequent handwashing is especially important in childcare settings and healthcare facilities.

It is important to note that adenoviruses can be resistant to many common disinfectant products, and can remain infectious for long periods (3-8 weeks) on surfaces and objects.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

There is currently no adenovirus vaccine available to the general public, but there is an adenovirus vaccine for U.S. military only. For more information about the vaccine, see [Adenovirus Vaccine Information Statement \(VIS\)](#).

For guidance to prevent adenovirus infections in healthcare settings, see [Prevention & Treatment for Health Care Professionals](#).

**This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician for specific clinical information.**