

**St. Edward's University**  
**Health Services**  
**Phone: 448-8686**

**Gastroenteritis and Food Poisoning**  
**"Traveler's Diarrhea"**

Gastroenteritis means *inflammation of the stomach and small and large intestines*. It is a common viral illness, hard to distinguish from food poisoning. Symptoms can include watery diarrhea and vomiting, and sometimes a slight fever. It is often called the "stomach flu," although it is *not* caused by the influenza viruses. Most of the time viral gastroenteritis clears up in 2-3 days with rest and a clear liquid diet, but it can linger longer than 2-3 days. Food poisoning generally clears up within 24-48 hours.

**Treatment for gastroenteritis and food poisoning:** When you have stopped vomiting, you can start on small quantities of water every 10 - 20 minutes. Gradually increase this to 1-2 cups every hour as tolerated. When your cramps and nausea are better you can then try Sprite, sports drinks like Gatorade, broth, and jello. *If nausea or vomiting recurs, go back to smaller amounts or begin the process again taking nothing by mouth for an hour or two.*

As your symptoms improve, begin to add easily digested foods like crackers, dry toast, bananas, rice, and applesauce. *For the next few days, avoid milk and dairy products, spicy or greasy foods, alcohol, and drugs that upset your stomach.*

**"Traveler's Diarrhea,"** primarily comes from impure water and is common following trips to Mexico or outside the USA. Drinking bottled water generally avoids this very unpleasant condition. Symptoms include nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. Traveler's Diarrhea is often associated with *e-coli*—a bacterial infection. *Promptly seek medical care if you suspect that you have consumed impure water or unsafely handled food.*

**Treatment for digestive system disorders:** Call the Health & Counseling Center, or seek urgent/emergency medical care, anytime you have: persistent vomiting, bloody stools, dehydration, fainting, high fever, increased pain or pain in the abdomen on your right side.