

## General Rules

**Wash hands regularly and avoid eating raw food to prevent enteric infection.**

### What is enteric infection?

Enteric infection can be caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungus. Common enteric infections include Cholera, Typhoid/Paratyphoid, bacillary dysentery, Amoebiasis and Enterohemorrhagic E. coli infections. These infections cause symptoms like diarrhea and are listed as Category 2 Communicable Diseases in Taiwan. Other pathogens causing diarrhea like Norovirus, Rotavirus, Non-typhoid Salmonellosis, Non-toxigenic Vibrio cholera, and Vibrio parahaemolyticus are not listed as notifiable communicable diseases. However, these pathogens can still cause cluster events and negatively influence public health.

### What are the routes of transmission for enteric infection?

Enteric infection is mainly transmitted through fecal-oral route; it can be acquired by either directly or indirectly consuming food or drinks contaminated by infected patients or feces with bacteria and viruses. Enteric infection can also be transmitted in air via droplets. For example, inhaling droplets produced from infected patient's vomit or excrement can lead to infection. In addition, improper eating habit or personal hygiene, such as eating raw food and not washing hands before meal or after going to the toilet, can result in infection by consuming helminth eggs inadvertently.

### What are the common symptoms for enteric infection?

Common symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, headache, malaise, and so on. Bloody and purulent stool can also be present. However, symptoms may not all occur concurrently. Factors like patient's age, personal health, causative pathogen, and the amount of contaminated food consumed can all influence the characteristic and severity of the symptoms. Immunocompromised patients may have more severe symptoms and enteric infection could be deadly in this patient group. Symptoms usually persist for 1 or 2 days, but can last up to 7 to 10 days.

### How to prevent enteric infection?

1. Food ingredients (including vegetables, pork, beef and fish), fruit and melon should be washed properly with water before eating.
2. Pay attention to personal hygiene. Wash hands properly with soap or hand wash

before preparing food and eating, after going to the toilet and after contacting patients.

3. Drinking water should be boiled to ensure safety.
4. Food that is contaminated by flies, expired, or rotten should always be discarded; it must not be consumed.
5. Exterminate and block out vectors like flies. Always cap trash cans and clean them regularly.
6. Wear a facemask when entering public space and cleaning patient's excrement or vomit to prevent acquiring infection via droplet.

#### How to cope with suspected enteric infection?

If symptoms suggesting enteric infection like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramp, and fever appear, people should seek medical attention immediately, and stay home until symptoms resolve for at least 48 hours before resuming school or work. If leaving home is necessary, wear a facemask. Pay attention to personal hygiene such as washing hands regularly and correctly and avoid touching nose and mouth to lower the risk of person-to-person transmission. For more related information, please visit Centers for Disease Control world wide web (<https://www.cdc.gov.tw>) or call toll-free disease prevention number 1922 (or 0800-001922).