

Adenovirus

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the symptoms of adenoviruses?

Adenoviruses are a group of viruses that most commonly cause respiratory illness. They can result in mild to severe illness and cause illnesses such as:

- Cold-like symptoms
- Sore throat
- Bronchitis
- Pneumonia
- Diarrhea
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Fever
- Bladder inflammation or infection
- Inflammation of the stomach and intestines
- Neurologic disease (conditions that affect the brain and spinal cord)

Who gets adenoviruses?

Anyone can get infected with an adenovirus at any age, but infections happen in children more than adults. People with weakened immune systems or existing respiratory or cardiac diseases are more likely than others to get very sick from an adenovirus infection.

How are adenoviruses spread?

Adenoviruses are common in places with large groups of children, such as child care settings, schools, and summer camps. Adenoviruses are very contagious and usually spread from infected people to others through:

- Close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands
- The air by coughing or sneezing
- Touching objects or surfaces with adenoviruses on them then touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

It is also possible to get infected when changing a diaper on a child who is infected. You can also get sick from eating food prepared by someone who didn't wash their hands properly after going to the bathroom.

Who is at risk for serious illness?

People with weak immune systems, or existing respiratory or cardiac disease, are at higher risk of developing severe illness from an adenovirus infection. They may also need treatment in a hospital to help them recover.

How is adenovirus diagnosed?

A health care provider may want to do a physical exam and possibly one or more of these tests to see if a virus or bacteria caused the infection.

- Blood test
- Urine test
- Swab from inside the nose
- Stool test
- Chest X-ray

What is the treatment for adenovirus?

There is no specific treatment for adenovirus. Most children get better on their own in a few days. Some infections, such as pink eye or pneumonia can last longer. Antibiotics will not cure adenovirus infections because antibiotics only kill bacteria. Adenovirus is caused by a virus.

What can be done to prevent adenovirus infections?

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—frequent handwashing is especially important in childcare settings and health care facilities
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

If you are sick you can help to protect others:

- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid sharing cups and eating utensils with others
- Refrain from kissing others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom

Where can I get more information?

- Your health care provider
- The NJ Department of Health www.nj.gov/health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/adenovirus/index.html

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional. Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention