

Adenovirus

Fact Sheet

What is it?

Adenoviruses most commonly cause respiratory illness. Depending on the infecting serotype they may also cause various other illness such as gastroenteritis, eye infections (conjunctivitis), bladder infections (cystitis) and rash illness. Outbreaks of adenovirus-associated respiratory disease have been more common in the late winter, spring and early summer. However, adenovirus infections can occur throughout the year.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of respiratory illness range from the common cold to pneumonia, croup and bronchitis. Acute respiratory disease (ARD) can be caused by adenovirus infections.

How is it spread?

Although all characteristics of the adenoviruses vary by type, all are transmitted by direct contact, fecal-oral transmission and occasionally waterborne transmission. Some types can establish persistent asymptomatic infections in tonsils, adenoids and intestines of infected hosts. Shedding can occur for months or years. Since adenovirus can be excreted for prolonged periods, the presence of virus does not necessarily mean it is associated with disease.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period for respiratory tract infection varies from 2 to 14 days. For gastroenteritis, the incubation period is 3 to 10 days.

Treatment

Most infections are mild and require only symptomatic treatment. Serious adenovirus illness can be managed by treating symptoms and complications of the infection.

How can I protect myself?

- Vaccines were developed to prevent ARD among military recruits however vaccination production was stopped in 1999.
- Strict attention to good infection control practices including contact and droplet precautions are effective.
- Maintaining adequate levels of chlorination is necessary for preventing swimming pool associated outbreaks of adenovirus eye infections.
- Frequent hand hygiene is recommended in group child care and institutional settings.

Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 x349. Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | hpePublicHealth.ca

References

- Pickering, L.K., ed. (2003). *Red Book: 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Heymann, D.L. (2008). *Control of Communicable Disease Manual* (19th Ed). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adenoviruses 2010.

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