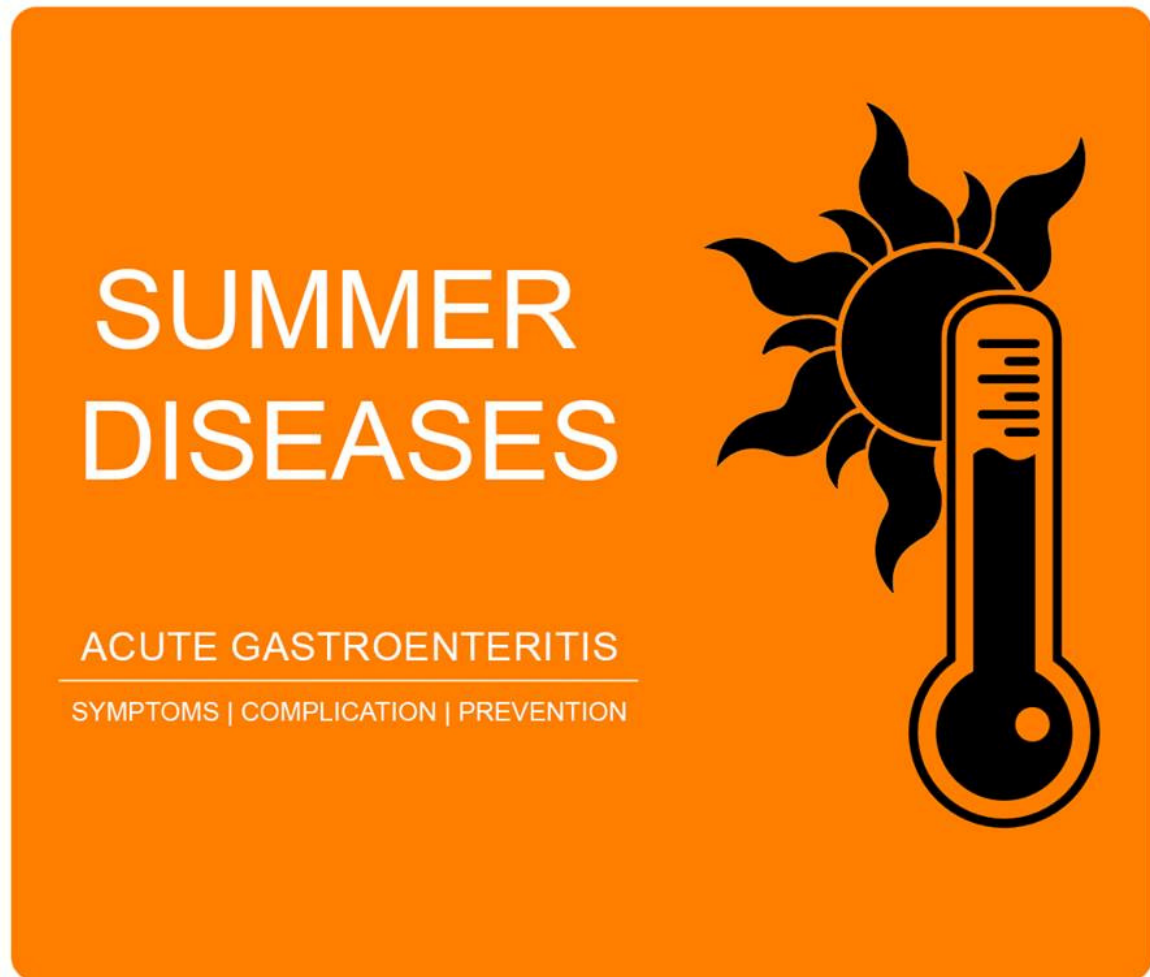


## Acute Gastroenteritis



**DR. PURNENDU BHOWMIK**  
MBBS, MS, FMAS, FIAGES, FALS, FAIS, FACS  
GI, GI Onco & Laparoscopic Surgeon



When you have diarrhea and vomiting, you may say you have the "stomach flu." These symptoms often are due to a condition called gastroenteritis.

With gastroenteritis, your stomach and intestines are irritated and inflamed. The cause is typically a viral or bacterial infection.

## Acute Gastroenteritis – Symptoms

- Watery, usually non-bloody diarrhea – bloody diarrhea usually means you have a different, more severe infection
- Abdominal cramps and pain
- Nausea, vomiting or both
- Occasional muscle aches or headache
- Low-grade fever

## When to see a doctor?

If you're an adult, call your doctor if:

- You've been vomiting for more than two days
- You're vomiting blood
- You're dehydrated – signs of dehydration include excessive thirst, dry mouth, deep yellow urine or little or no urine, and severe weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness
- You notice blood in your bowel movements
- You have a fever above 104 F (40 C)

## Complications

The main complication of viral gastroenteritis is dehydration — a severe loss of water and essential salts and minerals. If you're healthy and drink enough to replace fluids you lose from vomiting and diarrhea, dehydration shouldn't be a problem.

Infants, older adults and people with suppressed immune systems may become severely dehydrated when they lose more fluids than they can replace. Hospitalization might be needed so that lost fluids can be replaced intravenously. Dehydration can be fatal, but rarely.

## Prevention

The best way to prevent the spread of intestinal infections is to follow these precautions:

- Get your child vaccinated
- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Use separate personal items around your home.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is suffering from similar diarrhea, if possible.
- Disinfect hard surfaces.