

What is 'stomach flu?'

January 29 2019, by From Mayo Clinic News Network, Mayo Clinic News Network



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What many people commonly call "stomach flu" isn't flu at all. If you're tired and have an unsettled tummy, you may have a stomach virus.

"'Stomach flu' is a misnomer," explains Dr. Kermott, a preventive

medicine specialist. "Influenza is respiratory. It has to do with the lungs."

"You get the [dry cough](#), the fevers, the myalgias—where you feel like a train has hit you," says Dr. Kermott.

So what is the ailment we call "[stomach flu](#)?"

"It is just a common term for a viral gastroenteritis," says Dr. Kermott. "And everyone has probably had it."

Dr. Kermott says the best remedy for it is simply to rest.

"Symptoms exist because it's telling your body what to do," she adds. "It's telling you to slow down."

Dr. Kermott's advice is to avoid eating or drinking anything for a few hours.

"You just want to have your [stomach](#) settle a little bit first," says Dr. Kermott.

Then, she says, it's important to stay hydrated. Sip on a clear fluid. Water is best, but clear sodas or weak teas are OK, too. If you can't tolerate liquids, try chewing on ice chips.

When your stomach has fully settled, try eating small amounts of easily digestible foods like soda crackers, unbuttered toast, gelatin or a banana. Avoid fatty and spicy foods until you're fully recovered.

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Citation: What is 'stomach flu?' (2019, January 29) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-01-stomach-flu.html>

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