

# What parents should know about parechovirus

August 1 2022

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Last week, the CDC released an [advisory](#) regarding severe cases of parechovirus in young infants. Parechovirus is a common virus: most children have had it by the time they are five years old. Children with

the virus often exhibit fever, cold symptoms (runny nose, cough, congestion), gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting), and viral rash. Some may contract the infection and show no symptoms at all. Fortunately, most children will recover fully from the illness with time and supportive care, such as hydration and fever control with acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen.

Columbia pediatrician Cecilia Mo, MD says, "Although most infections are mild, we have to be extra cautious in newborns and infants younger than three months old because they are at increased risk of severe illness due to their developing immune systems. This can include seizures, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), and meningitis (inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord). If your infant has fever, abnormal movements, extreme sleepiness, [respiratory distress](#) (e.g. breathing rapidly, pulling in at the ribs or neck, nostrils flaring), is inconsolable, or is not feeding well, please talk to your pediatrician right away."

She adds, "The best way to keep our children safe is to prevent infection in the first place by washing our hands diligently and by keeping infants away from those who are sick."

Provided by Columbia University

Citation: What parents should know about parechovirus (2022, August 1) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-08-parents-parechovirus.html>

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