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**Diarrheal Disease Prevention and Management is Focus for World Digestive Health Day
*Tips and Resources for Consumers from the American College of Gastroenterology***

Bethesda, Maryland (May 26, 2011) – Diarrheal disease, a common gastrointestinal problem with potentially fatal implications in the developing world is the focus of World Digestive Health Day on May 29. Infections that cause diarrhea are serious public health challenges, both in the United States and globally. Acute diarrhea is one of the most commonly reported illnesses in the United States, second only to respiratory infections, according to the American College of Gastroenterology. Worldwide, acute diarrhea is the leading cause of death in children younger than four years old.

Increased awareness of prevention and management of diarrheal diseases is this year's objective for the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) in its annual observance of World Digestive Health Day. The American College of Gastroenterology has identified a number of resources for those seeking information on the global issue of diarrheal disease, as well as tips and strategies for those here in the United States to manage acute diarrhea.

“Here in the United States, exposure to the types of infections that cause acute diarrhea is very different than in the developing world, but the commitment of gastroenterologists to digestive health is the same,” explained ACG President Delbert L. Chumley, M.D., FACP. “The American College of Gastroenterology is a supporter of and contributor to the mission of the WGO and applauds this year's emphasis on improving child survival in developing countries and reducing morbidity and mortality from diarrheal diseases in the industrialized world.”

About Acute Diarrhea

In the United States, acute watery diarrhea is usually caused by a virus, while acute bloody diarrhea suggests a bacterial cause such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* or *Shigella*. Travel to developing areas of the world can increase risk of exposure to other bacterial pathogens that cause diarrhea, while eating contaminated foods can cause diarrhea due to *E. coli*.

Most episodes of acute diarrhea resolve quickly and without antibiotic therapy with simple dietary modifications, according to experts from the American College of Gastroenterology who warn, however, that those affected should see a doctor if they experience bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, or diarrhea lasting more than 48 hours.

Tips to Address Acute Diarrhea from the American College of Gastroenterology

It is important to take plenty of fluid and salt to avoid dehydration. Milk and dairy products should be avoided for 24 to 48 hours as they can make diarrhea worse. Initial dietary choices when re-feeding should begin with soups and broth.

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Anti-diarrheal drug therapy can be helpful to control severe symptoms, and includes bismuth subsalicylate and antimotility agents such as loperamide. These, however, should be avoided in people with high fever or bloody diarrhea and in children because the use of antidiarrheals can lead to potential complications.

Resources on Diarrheal Diseases

American College of Gastroenterology

“ACG Guideline on Acute Infectious Diarrhea in Adults” (1997) Herbert L. DuPont, M.D.

<http://www.acg.gi.org/physicians/guidelines/InfectiousDiarrhea.pdf>

“Diarrheal Diseases” Patient Information Series, Christina M. Surawicz, M.D., MACG (2007)

<http://www.acg.gi.org/patients/gihealth/diarrheal.asp>

World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO)

World Digestive Health Day “Enteric Infections: Prevention & Management” (May 29, 2011)

<http://www.wgofoundation.org/wdhd-2011.html>

“WGO Practice Guideline Acute Diarrhea” (2008)

http://www.worldgastroenterology.org/assets/downloads/en/pdf/guidelines/01_acute_diarrhea.pdf

U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Travelers’ Diarrhea – Disease Information

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/travelersdiarrhea_g.htm

National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

“Diarrhea” Digestive Diseases A-Z

<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/diarrhea/>

“Lo que usted debe saber sobre la diarrea” Spanish Language Patient information on Diarrhea

http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/spanish/pubs/diarrhea_ez/index.htm

World Health Organization (WHO)

“Diarrhoeal Disease” Health Topics

<http://www.who.int/topics/diarrhoea/en/>

One World Health

Diarrheal Diseases Fact Sheet

<http://www.oneworldhealth.org/img/pdfdownloads/Diarrheal%20Disease%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

About the American College of Gastroenterology

Founded in 1932, the American College of Gastroenterology is an organization with an international membership of more than 12,000 individuals from 80 countries. The College is committed to serving the clinically oriented digestive disease specialist though its emphasis on scholarly practice, teaching and research. The mission of the College is to serve the evolving needs of physicians in the delivery of high quality, scientifically sound, humanistic, ethical, and cost-effective health care to gastroenterology patients. www.acg.gi.org Follow [ACG on Twitter](#)

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