

Unprotected People #92

Rotavirus

Holly's Experience with Rotavirus

In August 2006, the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended routine vaccination of infants with 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine (RotaTeq) administered orally at ages 2, 4, and 6 months.

Rotavirus is the most common cause of severe diarrhea among children, resulting in the hospitalization of approximately 55,000 children each year in the United States. In developing countries, rotavirus infection is a major cause of childhood death and is responsible for approximately half a million deaths annually among children younger than 5 years.

In the following article, actress Holly Robinson Peete describes her experience as the mother of a toddler with rotavirus infection. It is reprinted courtesy of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.

A few years ago, while on a family vacation, Holly's son, then two years old, became very ill. He started vomiting profusely and had trouble keeping down any liquids. Extremely concerned, Holly and her husband took him to the nearest emergency room where he was diagnosed with rotavirus diarrhea and received intravenous fluids to treat his dehydration.

"As the wife of a football player and mother of three boys, I always thought I would have to take one of my sons to the emergency room for a broken arm or cut, but not for something like diarrhea," said Holly. "It was heart-wrenching to see my son so sick and even scarier, I had never heard of rotavirus before the doctor talked about it. Now it's my turn to get the word out, so others can be aware of rotavirus and the potential effect it can have on a family."

Holly's son has recovered from his experience with rotavirus, but there are too many stories like Holly's every year in the United States.

"My story shows that this can happen to any young child, at any time," adds Holly. "It happened to my child, it can happen to yours."

*Holly Robinson Peete
Mom, Film and Television Actor*