

Stopping Rotovirus In Its Tracks

Cincinnati Children Hosp Med Ctr



Rotavirus infection is the primary cause of gastroenteritis in children. More than 600,000 children around the world die every year from this virus, mostly in developing countries.

Gastroenteritis results in painful inflammation and infection of the gastrointestinal tract — symptoms include diarrhea, internal bleeding, vomiting and dehydration.

“ Scientists at the Cincinnati (Ohio) Children’s Hospital Medical Center Division of Infectious Diseases have developed an oral vaccine against the virus.

Richard Ward, Ph.D., and David Bernstein, M.D. developed the rotavirus vaccine from 1989 to 1995. Initial funding was provided by the National Institutes of Health. The Rotarix™ vaccine immunizes children against rotavirus infection and is quickly gaining acceptance around the world.

The government of El Salvador has recently undertaken a national immunization program using Rotarix. Prior to the program, there were 15-20 deaths and hundreds of hospitalizations of children per year due to rotavirus infection.

Since the Rotarix vaccine program was introduced in early 2006, there have been no reported deaths or hospitalizations of children caused by rotavirus infection.

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