

Who is at risk of getting norovirus?

No specific group is at risk of contracting norovirus. People of all ages can be infected. The very young and the elderly should take extra care if infected, as dehydration is more common in these age groups.

The Health Protection Agency say outbreaks can be shortened when control measures are implemented quickly. This will include closing affected areas and using strict hygiene measures.

Are there any long-term effects?

There are no long-term effects from norovirus.

What you can do to help us stop the spread of infection:

1. Do not visit health care settings if you, or someone you have been in contact with, has had diarrhoea and/or vomiting until 48 hours after symptoms have ceased. There is a real risk that you could introduce the infection into the area.
2. Wash your hands frequently with warm water and liquid soap, especially after using the toilet and before preparing food. Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus.
3. If you are concerned about the health of the person you are visiting, please speak to a member of staff.
4. Do not handle or prepare food for other people until you have been symptom free for a minimum of 48 hours.

(Information sourced from the Health Protection Agency
www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/norovirus/faq.htm)

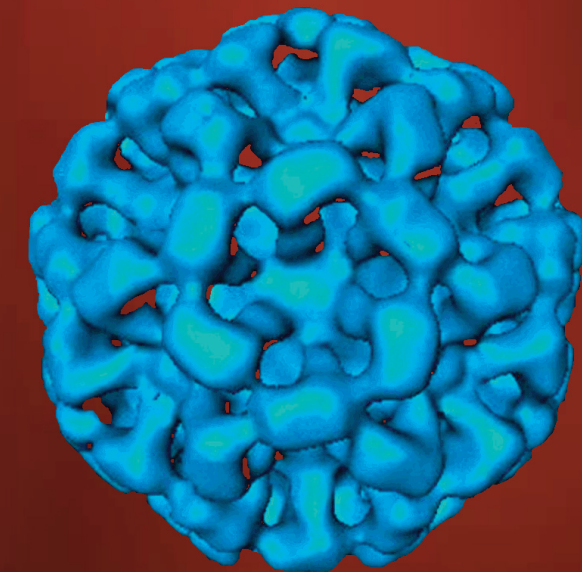
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NHS

Norovirus

Winter vomiting and diarrhoea



Say no to norovirus

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Infection Prevention Teams in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

What are noroviruses?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that are the most common cause of gastroenteritis (stomach bugs) in England and Wales. In the past, noroviruses have also been called the 'winter vomiting virus' or 'Norwalk like virus'.

How does norovirus spread?

The virus is easily spread from one person to another. It can be caught from contact with an infected person, by consuming contaminated food or water, or contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of a norovirus infection begin around 12 to 48 hours after the patient becomes infected. Symptoms can last for 12 to 60 hours. They start with the sudden onset of nausea followed by projectile vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Some people will have a raised temperature, headaches and aching limbs. Most people make a full recovery within 1 – 2 days but some people (usually the very young or elderly) may become very dehydrated and require hospital treatment.

Why does norovirus often cause outbreaks?

Norovirus often causes outbreaks because it is easily spread from one person to another, and the virus is able to survive in the environment for many days.

As there are many different strains of norovirus, recent infection gives little protection from becoming infected again.

Outbreaks tend to affect more than 50% of susceptible people. This will usually happen in semi-closed environments such as nursing homes, hospitals, schools and cruise ships.

How can these outbreaks be stopped?

Outbreaks can be difficult to control and long lasting because the virus is easily spread from one person to another and can survive in the environment for a long time.

The most effective way to help stop an outbreak is to disinfect the contaminated areas and ensure good hygiene, for example thorough hand washing with soap and water, and scrupulous food hygiene. Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus.

Anyone who has the symptoms of norovirus should be isolated or avoid contact with others for a minimum of 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped. Those affected should not go to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

How is norovirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for norovirus apart from letting the illness run its course. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Medical advice should be sought if symptoms do not resolve themselves.

If I'm suffering from norovirus, how can I prevent others from becoming infected?

Good hygiene is important in preventing others from becoming infected. This includes thorough hand washing with soap and water before and after contact with an infected person.

Do not handle or prepare food for other people until you have been symptom free for a minimum of 48 hours.