



Caliciviridae - Genus Norovirus

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and water,  
particularly  
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before eating  
food.*

## What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a common virus that is passed from person to person and causes diarrhea and vomiting in the community and in hospitals. Most infections and outbreaks are seen during winter months.

## Why does Norovirus cause problems to people in hospital?

Norovirus affects people of all ages. The virus is easily spread in areas where there are large numbers of people together for several days or more. In hospitals, staff, patients and visitors can all be affected by Norovirus, which can cause disruptions in patient care, not to mention being very uncomfortable for those with the illness.

## What are the symptoms of Norovirus?

Symptoms of a Norovirus infection will begin to show around 12 to 48 hours after becoming infected and may last from 12 to 60 hours. It often starts with the sudden onset of nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea and stomach cramps. Some people may also have a high temperature, headaches and aching limbs. Most people make a full recovery in 1 to 2 days, however some (usually the young and old) may become very dehydrated and require hospital treatment.

## How is Norovirus spread?

Norovirus can spread very quickly and easily from person to person. The virus is passed on in an infected person's vomit or diarrhea. It can be caught by consuming contaminated food or water, by touching contaminated surfaces or objects or by person to person contact.

## How do I know if I have Norovirus?

Diagnosis is often based on the combination of symptoms and the short time-span of the illness. If it is suspected you have Norovirus, your stool sample will be sent to the laboratory for testing.

## Can Norovirus be treated?

Antibiotics are not needed, or effective, in treating Norovirus. There is no specific treatment apart from letting the illness run its course. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

# Norovirus Information

## What happens in the hospital?

If infected, you will have a toilet, bathroom or commode assigned specifically for your use. Staff will wear a mask, gloves and a gown when they are caring for you or are in your room. Staff will wash and dry their hands before and after providing care and putting on and taking off gloves. This will help prevent spread of Norovirus to other patients in other areas. If you are in a room with other patients, beds may remain empty until you (and anyone else with the infection in the room) are symptom free.

## How can I stop the spread of Norovirus?

It is important that you wash your hands well with soap and water, particularly after going to the toilet and before eating food. If you cannot reach the sink ask a member of staff to bring you a bowl of soapy water and a cloth.

If you are vomiting and/or have diarrhea you will be asked to remain in your room until 48 hours after these symptoms have stopped.

Please keep bedside tables clear and put your belongings away in the bedside locker to enable the housekeeping staff to clean around your bed and high-touch areas. Please ensure that food brought in for you is covered and not left open on the bedside table.

## Will any of my treatments be delayed?

No. Most investigations and treatments will continue, and staff will take the correct precautions. Sometimes, a non-urgent test may be delayed if you are experiencing severe diarrhea.

## Can I go home with Norovirus?

If your symptoms are improving, and you are feeling well enough, your doctor may allow you to go home. You will need to take the same safety measures at home as you did in the hospital. Most importantly, you must wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet or vomiting.

## Can my washing be sent home?

Yes. Laundry can be taken home and washed as usual. Where possible, wash laundry on a separate cycle at the highest temperature the fabric will tolerate. Hands should be washed with soap and water after handling soiled clothing.

## Can I have visitors if I have a Norovirus?

Norovirus can be a risk to visitors. Restrict visitors to a maximum of two at a time. It is important that they wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after visiting you.

Avoid contact with children, the elderly and people with long-term illness while you still have symptoms and for two days afterwards, to avoid spreading the infection to them. Friends and relatives should not visit if they themselves are feeling unwell or have diarrhea.

## Can Norovirus come back?

Yes. It is possible to catch different strains of the virus even if you have had a Norovirus illness before.

