



the Spread of Norovirus

Follow these simple tips to reduce the chances of you, your family, and others from becoming sick from norovirus:

Practice proper hand hygiene:

Wash your hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers and always before eating or preparing food. Alcohol-based sanitizers (containing at least 62% ethanol) may be a helpful addition to hand-washing, but they are not a substitute for washing with soap and water.



Take care in the kitchen: Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly before eating them.

Do not prepare food while sick: People who are infected with norovirus should not prepare food for others while they have symptoms and for 3 days after they recover from their illness.

Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces: After an episode of illness, such as vomiting or diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces by using a bleach-based household cleaner as directed on the product label or a solution made by adding 5-25 tablespoons of household bleach to 1 gallon of water.

Wash laundry thoroughly: Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or fecal matter. Handle soiled items carefully—without agitating them—to avoid spreading virus. They should be laundered with detergent at the maximum available cycle length and then machine dried.

QUICK NOROVIRUS INFORMATION

- The average **incubation** period for norovirus-associated gastroenteritis is 12 to 48 hours, with a median of approximately 33 hours.
- Illness is characterized by acute onset vomiting; watery, non-bloody diarrhea with abdominal cramps, and nausea. In addition, myalgia, malaise, and headache are commonly reported. Low-grade fever is present in about half of cases.
- Symptoms usually last 24 to 60 hours.
- Dehydration is the most common complication.
- Volunteer studies suggest that up to 30% of infections may be asymptomatic.
- After vomiting begins, **stop drinking and eating for about 2 hours** to allow your stomach to rest.
- Begin drinking about 1-ounce (2 tablespoons) of clear liquids (liquid you can see through, such as water, Gatorade, ginger-ale, etc.), every 15 minutes.
- When retaining oral fluids, begin a clear liquid diet, which includes, apple or cranberry juice, Tea, Jello, popsicles, soft drinks, bouillons, sport drinks, etc.
- Saltines and dry toast may be added next.
- The BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast) is often suggested to follow clear liquids.
- If having diarrhea, avoid dairy products until stools return to normal for 48 hours.
- **SEEK MEDICAL CARE**—If unable to retain oral fluids after several hours, dizziness continues, and/or you are not able to urinate.

Information Sources : Noroviruses, CDC and University Health Services

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UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

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Nausea, Vomiting, maybe diarrhea...

NOROVIRUSES



*FOOD POISONING,
GASTROENTERITIS,
GIU, STOMACH FLU ?*

Many names, same symptoms — Noroviruses are a group of related viruses. Infections with these viruses affects the stomach and intestines. Anyone can become sick with norovirus—and you can get it more than once during your life.

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Noroviruses

The most common cause of gastroenteritis, (pronounced as GAS-tro-en-ter-I-tis), in the United States is Noroviruses. CDC estimates that more than 20 million cases of acute gastroenteritis are due to norovirus infection.



Norovirus illness often begins suddenly and, when infected, you may feel sick, with stomach cramping, vomiting, or diarrhea. Infections are usually not serious, and most people recover within 1 or 2 days with no long-term health effects.

MANY NAMES, SAME SYMPTOMS

You may hear Noroviruses called *Viral gastroenteritis*, *acute gastroenteritis*, *food poisoning*, or *stomach flu*. It is true that food poisoning *can* be caused by Noroviruses, but it can also be caused by other germs and chemicals. Norovirus is *not* related to the flu (influenza), a respiratory illness caused by influenza virus.

Norovirus is the leading cause of disease from contaminated foods in the United States; it is responsible for more illnesses than all other viruses, bacteria, and parasites combined. Of all foodborne disease outbreaks with a known cause in the United States, over half are caused by Noroviruses. The types of foods most commonly involved in foodborne norovirus outbreaks include leafy greens (such as in lettuce) and raw shellfish (such as oysters). However, any food item that is served raw or handled after being cooked can become contaminated with Noroviruses.

SYMPTOMS

Norovirus infection symptoms usually include:

- DIARRHEA
- VOMITING
- NAUSEA
- STOMACH CRAMPING

Other, less common symptoms may include

- Low-grade fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- General sense of fatigue

Most people with the norovirus get better within 1-2 days. Some may feel very sick and vomit many times a day.

Because they can't drink enough liquids to replace those lost from vomiting and diarrhea, some people become dehydrated.

Dehydration

Symptoms of dehydration include

- a decrease in urination,
- a dry mouth and throat,
- and feeling dizzy when standing up.



Severe dehydration can be serious. The best way to prevent dehydration is to DRINK PLENTY OF LIQUIDS. The most helpful fluids for this purpose are oral rehydration fluids. Other drinks that are clear (liquids that you can see through), do not contain caffeine or alcohol, can also help with mild dehydration. However, these drinks do not replace important nutrients and minerals that are lost due to vomiting and diarrhea. Seek medical care if dehydration symptoms continues.

Norovirus Gets Around Quickly

Norovirus can spread rapidly from person to person in crowded, closed places like schools, dorms, hotels, cruise ships, day-care centers and long-term care facilities. Noroviruses can also be a major cause of gastroenteritis in restaurants and catered-meal settings if contaminated food is served.

The virus is found in the stool (fecal matter) and vomit of infected people.

You can get it by:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus.
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then putting your hand or fingers in your mouth.
- Having direct contact with another person who is infected with norovirus (i.e. kissing, sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is infected).



People with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill until at least 3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for even longer after recovering from the illness.

No Vaccine and No Treatment

There is no vaccine to prevent norovirus infection, and there is no drug to treat people who are sick from the virus. Antibiotic drugs will not help if you have norovirus infection. This is because antibiotics fight against bacteria, not viruses. However, there are practical tips you can follow to protect yourself and others from getting infected with norovirus. (See *Stop the Spread* on the next page.)

The first norovirus strain, the Norwalk agent, was discovered from an outbreak of gastroenteritis that occurred in a school in Norwalk, Ohio, in 1968. Many outbreaks with similar symptoms were later reported from other settings, such as restaurants, nursing homes, day care centers, and cruise ships. These outbreaks were found to be caused by viruses related to the Norwalk agent, so the viruses first became known as Norwalk-like viruses. Norovirus is now the official name for this group of viruses.