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# Norovirus Infection Control



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## Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Clinical Nurse Lead, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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## Further Information

If you require further information or advice, please ask the Sister or Senior Nurse in charge of the ward.

Further information can also be obtained from the Infection Control Team on **01932 722128 / 723052 / 722544**.

Additional information can be obtained by logging onto:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/norovirus-guidance-data-and-analysis>

## Norovirus

### What is Norovirus?

The Norovirus is the most common cause of gut infection in the UK. There are probably about 600,000 to 1 million cases of the disease every year, and it causes disease only in humans.

Norovirus is also known as Norwalk virus, small round structured virus, winter vomiting disease and gastric flu.

### Symptoms

The incubation period is usually 24 to 48 hours. Symptoms include:

- Vomiting (often sudden and projectile)
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea

Although this is an unpleasant disease, it is very rarely dangerous. Usually symptoms last for up to 2 days and most people make a full recovery. In most cases no treatment is required, but it is sensible to drink plenty of clear fluid as soon as the vomiting has stopped to avoid dehydration.

## How is it spread?

Norovirus is spread extremely easily from one person to another. Spread can happen through poor hand hygiene after using the toilet.

It can also spread by being exposed to viruses in the vomit of an affected individual.

Virus particles may settle on surfaces and be picked up on the hands of another person; only a few of these particles are needed to start an infection.

Therefore it is easy to see how infection can spread very readily (in many ways similar to the common cold), particularly in areas where there are large numbers of people gathered together such as schools, nursing homes, hospitals, hotels and even cruise ships.

Norovirus is infectious for up to 48 hours.

Food outbreaks have been associated with ready to eat foods (e.g. salads and shellfish harvested in contaminated water) and drinking water.

## Prevention

Good hand washing is the key to the prevention of Norovirus infection.

Hands must be washed before handling food and after visiting the toilet.

Anyone with diarrhoea should not prepare or handle food for others.

You must wash your hands on entering and before leaving an area where there is diarrhoea and vomiting.

Visitors with symptoms should not visit until 48 hours free from symptoms etc.

The virus can live for days on floors and surfaces so prompt cleaning up of vomit or diarrhoea, and decontamination of the area with dilute bleach where possible, is advised.

In a hospital or care home patients with vomiting and diarrhoea may be nursed in a separate area or room.

Where there are many cases a ward or ward area maybe closed to new admissions with special precautions until patients no longer have symptoms.

## Summary

- Norovirus causes diarrhoea and vomiting.
- It spreads readily (in many ways similar to the common cold).
- It is rarely serious but symptoms can last up to two days.
- Hand hygiene is key to prevention of infection.