



Norovirus Information: The Facts

Also Known as the Stomach Bug or Stomach Flu

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- ☐ Sudden-onset vomiting
- ☐ Watery diarrhea
- ☐ Nausea, stomach pain
- ☐ Fever, body aches, headaches in some people

IS IT CONTAGIOUS?

- ☐ **Norovirus infection is very contagious** and can, like COVID-19, spread quickly in a crowded environment such as a shelter.
- ☐ Norovirus particles are extremely small and billions of them are in the stool and vomit of an infected person.
- ☐ It takes as few as 10-100 virus particles to make someone ill.
- ☐ A person infected with Norovirus is contagious 2-3 days before symptoms start up to 2 weeks after symptoms end.
- ☐ For safety precautions, all vomit and diarrhea incidents should be treated as if Norovirus is present.

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME INFECTED?

- ☐ Touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching the mouth, eyes, or nose.
- ☐ Sharing toothbrushes, towels, utensils, or other personal items.
- ☐ Being present while someone is vomiting. Norovirus particles in vomit can spread through the air up to 25 feet away.
- ☐ Caring for a sick person.
- ☐ Shaking hands with someone who did not wash their hands after using the bathroom or changing a diaper. *People are advised not to shake hands during the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- ☐ Not washing hands after changing a diaper or before eating or preparing food.
- ☐ Eating food/drinking liquids prepared by someone who is ill or who has recently been ill with a Norovirus infection.

HOW DO YOU TREAT NOROVIRUS?

- ☐ There is no medication for a Norovirus infection.
- ☐ Drinking plenty of fluids is urged to prevent dehydration.

HOW LONG DO THE SYMPTOMS OF A NORVIRUS INFECTION LAST?

A Norovirus infection usually lasts 1 to 2 ½ days, but the virus can remain in the stool for up to 2 weeks.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT NOROVIRUS FROM SPREADING?

- ☐ There is no vaccine to prevent a Norovirus infection.
- ☐ Wash your hands following the proper procedures even if you wear gloves.
- ☐ Do not prepare food with your bare hands. If you have symptoms of a Norovirus infection, **report your illness to your supervisor and STAY AWAY from work** for at least 48 hours after the symptoms disappear.

WILL HANDWASHING REMOVE NOROVIRUS PARTICLES?

- ☐ Yes. **Proper** handwashing should get rid of the virus particles.
- ☐ Use regular soap and warm water, scrub vigorously for at least 20 seconds and get under the nails. Dry hands thoroughly.
- ☐ Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not eliminate Norovirus particles. There is no substitute for proper handwashing.
- ☐ Hand sanitizers may be used after proper handwashing if desired.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE VOMITS IN A PUBLIC PLACE?

- ☐ When people vomit, they may send over 300,000 Norovirus particles into the air which then land on everything in their path up to 25 feet away.
- ☐ Cleanup of vomit and diarrhea involves a more stringent cleaning process than a routine cleaning procedure because Norovirus particles can survive several days on hard surfaces.
- ☐ Only specially trained workers should clean up vomit and diarrhea following established Decontamination Procedures for Vomit, Diarrhea, and Other Bodily Fluids to keep the virus from spreading.

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