

9-2018 Norovirus

GUIDANCE ON HOW TO DETECT, TREAT, AND PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE NOROVIRUS

Norovirus, which causes diarrhoea and vomiting, is one of the most common stomach bugs in the UK. It's also called the winter vomiting bug because it's more common in winter, although you can catch it at any time of the year. Norovirus can be very unpleasant but it usually clears up by itself in a few days.

Symptoms - you're likely to have norovirus if you suddenly feel sick and experience projectile vomiting or watery diarrhoea.

Some people also have a slight fever, headaches, painful stomach cramps and aching limbs. The symptoms appear one to two days after you become infected and typically last for up to two or three days.

What to do if you have norovirus- if you experience sudden diarrhoea and vomiting, the best thing to do is to stay at home until you're feeling better. There's no cure for Norovirus, so you have to let it run its course. You don't usually need to get medical advice unless there's a risk of a more serious problem. To help ease your own symptoms (and those of your family, including children):

- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You need to drink more than usual to replace the fluids lost from vomiting and diarrhoea – as well as water, adults could also try fruit juice and soup. Avoid giving fizzy drinks or fruit juice to children as it can make their diarrhoea worse. Babies should continue to feed as usual, either with breast milk or other milk feeds.
- Take paracetamol for any fever or aches and pains.
- Get plenty of rest.
- If you feel like eating, eat plain foods such as soup, rice, pasta and bread.
- Use special rehydration drinks made from sachets bought from pharmacies if you have signs of dehydration, such as a dry mouth or dark urine
- Adults can take anti-diarrhoeal and anti-emetic (anti-vomiting) medication – these aren't suitable for everyone though, so you should check the medicine leaflet or ask your pharmacist or GP for advice before trying them.

Norovirus can spread very easily. Persons infected are advised to wash their hands regularly whilst ill, and stay off work until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have cleared to reduce the risk of passing it on. Visiting your GP surgery whilst infected with norovirus can put others at risk, so it's best to call your GP or NHS 111 (in the UK) if you're concerned or feel you need advice.

Norovirus can be caught if you:

- **are in close contact with someone infected with norovirus** – they may breathe out small particles containing the virus that you could inhale
- **touch contaminated surfaces or objects** – the virus can survive outside the body for several days
- **eat contaminated food** – this can happen if an infected person doesn't wash their hands before handling food

A person with Norovirus is most infectious from when their symptoms start until 48 hours after all their symptoms have passed, although they may also be infectious for a short time before and after this. You can get Norovirus more than once because the virus is always changing, so your body is unable to build up long-term resistance to it.

Preventing Norovirus

- **Stay off work** until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have passed
- **Wash your hands** frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, alcohol gel does not kill the virus. (Office Leaders must ensure that soap is always available in office toilets)
- **Disinfect any surfaces or objects** that could be contaminated
- **Wash any items of clothing or bedding** that could have become contaminated separately on a hot wash to ensure the virus is killed.
- **Don't share towels and flannels.**
- **Ensure toilets are kept clean** and clean the surrounding area, particularly if someone has been unwell as a result of norovirus
- **Avoid eating raw, unwashed produce** and only eat oysters from a reliable source, as oysters can carry norovirus.

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/>

How is the item to be cascaded and implemented?

Toolbox talk / Team briefing / SHEQ notice board Process change / Supply chain

SHE Induction / Other

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