



## **NOROVIRUS**

### **What is norovirus?**

Noroviruses are members of a group of viruses called caliciviruses, also known previously as “Norwalk-like viruses.” Infection with norovirus affects the stomach and intestines, causing an illness called gastroenteritis. The virus was first identified in 1972 after an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in Norwalk, Ohio.

### **Who gets norovirus?**

Anyone worldwide can get norovirus infections, but it is more common in adults and older children. Humans are the only known hosts.

### **How is norovirus spread?**

People get norovirus infections by swallowing food or water that is contaminated with stool from an infected person. Outbreaks of norovirus have taken place in restaurants, cruise ships, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, banquet halls, summer camps, and family dinners.

### **What are the symptoms of norovirus?**

The symptoms of gastroenteritis are nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea accompanied by abdominal cramps. Some people complain of headache, fever with chills, and muscle aches. Symptoms are usually brief and last only one or two days. However, during that brief period, people can feel very ill and vomit, often violently and without warning, many times a day.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms usually begin 24 to 48 hours after ingestion of the virus but can appear as early as 12 hours after exposure.

### **Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?**

Infected individuals should be excluded from work or school until at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. Avoid visiting health care facilities, schools, daycares, and other places to prevent exposing others to norovirus. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, particularly after using the toilet and before preparing or handling food.

### **What is the treatment for norovirus?**

No specific treatment is available. Persons who are severely dehydrated may need rehydration therapy.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of norovirus?**

- Wash hands with soap and warm water after toilet visits and before preparing or eating food.
- Cook all shellfish thoroughly before eating.
- Wash raw vegetables before eating.
- Dispose of sewage and soiled diapers in a sanitary manner.
- Food handlers with symptoms of Norwalk-like illness should not prepare or touch food.

## **Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>