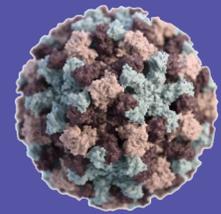


NOROVIRUS



Norovirus is a virus that causes vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramping. Norovirus is often incorrectly referred to as “the stomach flu”; however, norovirus illness is not related to the flu (influenza), which causes respiratory symptoms. Norovirus causes approximately 20 million illnesses each year in the United States. Anyone can get norovirus infection and become sick. There are many different types of noroviruses; having a norovirus infection once does not mean you will not get it again during your lifetime.

How is it spread?



- ▶ The virus is found in the stool or vomit of someone infected with norovirus from the time symptoms start until at least 48 hours after symptoms end, and probably longer.
- ▶ The virus can be on a person’s hands and spread to others, which is why handwashing is important.
- ▶ It can be spread by eating food or drink that has been contaminated with norovirus as well as touching objects with norovirus on them (e.g., shaking hands with an infected person, touching a doorknob that has norovirus on it) and then touching your mouth.
- ▶ Norovirus can survive on surfaces for 14 days or longer.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms usually begin 12-48 hours after becoming infected with the virus and can include:



Common symptoms:

- ▶ Vomiting (more common in children)
- ▶ Watery, non-bloody diarrhea
- ▶ Stomach cramps

Occasional symptoms:

- ▶ Low-grade fever
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Chills
- ▶ Muscle aches
- ▶ Fatigue

What are the treatment options?



- ▶ There is no treatment for norovirus; people usually recover on their own 2-3 days after symptoms start.
- ▶ Drinking plenty of liquids is important to replace fluid loss and to make sure the body does not become dehydrated.

How can it be prevented?



- ▶ Handwashing is the most important step to prevent the spread of norovirus. It is essential to wash hands after using the restroom and before touching food.
- ▶ Anyone with diarrhea or vomiting should stay home from work or school until symptoms are gone in order to prevent spreading norovirus to others.
- ▶ People with diarrhea or who are vomiting should not handle food, work in or attend day care centers or schools, or take care of patients in a health care facility until **48 hours after their symptoms are gone**.
- ▶ No vaccine is available to prevent norovirus infections.

