



Norovirus

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> About this leaflet

The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you about Norovirus, how to avoid catching it and what to do if you do.

> What is Norovirus?

Norovirus, also known as the winter vomiting bug, is a highly contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. Norovirus can spread very easily and can affect anyone of any age. It is more common in the winter, however, you can still catch it any time of the year.

You can get Norovirus more than once because the virus is always changing and your body is unable to build up long term resistance.

> Norovirus symptoms

The symptoms of norovirus usually develop between 24 - 48 hours after exposure to the virus and may include:

- Severe vomiting
- Watery diarrhoea
- Nausea
- Mild fever (over 38°C, or 100.4°F)
- Headaches
- Stomach cramps
- Aching limbs

Symptoms typically last between 2-3 days. If your symptoms do not improve, please speak to your clinical team.

> How to treat Norovirus

There is no treatment for Norovirus, but your clinical team will help manage your symptoms.

> How is Norovirus spread?

Norovirus is caused by a virus. You can catch Norovirus through:

- Close contact with someone with Norovirus.
- Eating food prepared or handled by someone with Norovirus.
- Touching contaminated surfaces or objects – Norovirus can survive outside the body for several days.

> What to do if you catch Norovirus

If you catch Norovirus, it is recommended to do the following:

- Drink plenty of liquid.
- Eat when you can do so.
- Avoid alcohol.

> How do we stop Norovirus spreading in hospital?

There are many things you can do to limit the spread of Norovirus in hospital:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, particularly before eating and after using the toilet.
- If you have symptoms of Norovirus in hospital, you will be isolated in a single room until you are at least 48 hours symptom free.
- Staff will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – gloves, apron and sometimes a mask.
- Stool and/or vomit samples will be taken and sent to the laboratory for testing.
- Your room will be cleaned twice a day using a chlorine-based product.

> How do I prevent my visitors getting Norovirus?

To prevent visitors from getting Norovirus, are advised to do the following:

- Wash their hands on entering and leaving your room and ward.
- Those with weakened immune systems should avoid visiting while you have symptoms.
- If your visitors/family have symptoms, they should avoid visiting until they are at least 48 hours symptom free.

> Further advice and information

For further advice and information, please speak to your doctor or nurse on the ward or department. You can get more information from NHS Inform website: <http://www.nhsinform.co.uk>

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