



*In this document, the term patient is inclusive of patient, resident and client.*

## What is norovirus?

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus which can cause diarrhea and vomiting. Norovirus is known to cause outbreaks in crowded places such as long term care homes, hospitals, schools, and cruise ships.

## What are the symptoms of norovirus?

Symptoms of norovirus include:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain and cramps

You may also experience chills, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, and low grade fever. Symptoms may start within as little as 12 hours or up to 48 hours after exposure to the virus.

## How do you get norovirus?

You can get norovirus by:

- Having contact with, or providing care for, someone with the virus.
- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with the virus. Food can be contaminated with norovirus if it is handled by someone who is infected, if it is placed on a surface that is contaminated with norovirus, or if it is in contact with contaminated water while it is grown, produced, or harvested.
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with the virus (door knobs, taps, hand rails etc.), and then touching your mouth before washing your hands.

## Can norovirus be treated?

There is no prescription medication to treat a norovirus infection. Most people feel better within 2 to 3 days. You should drink plenty of fluids. If symptoms are severe, hospitalization may be required. You can get norovirus more than once.

## If I have norovirus, what precautions should I take at home?

To prevent the spread of norovirus at home:

- Stay home if you are feeling unwell so you don't spread the virus to others.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after toilet visits and before preparing or eating food.  
Note: Do not prepare food for others when you have symptoms of norovirus illness and for 3 days after you recover.
- After episodes of vomiting or diarrhea, clean contaminated surfaces with hot, soapy water and then disinfect the area using a bleach-based household cleaner. Immediately remove and wash dirty clothing or linen in a washing machine on the hot water cycle using detergent.





### **What happens if I have norovirus in a healthcare facility?**

- You may be moved to a single room with your own bathroom.
- A sign is placed on the door with instructions for all visitors and staff providing care to wear a gown and gloves when entering your room.
- Everyone is reminded to clean their hands before going into your room, and after leaving your room.
- Surfaces and equipment in your room is cleaned regularly by the healthcare team.
- If you are in the hospital, care is provided in your room. You are to stay in your room unless it is medically necessary for you to leave (example: going for a medical test or procedure).
- If you are in long term care, you are to stay in your room until you are symptom free (example: no fever, vomiting, nausea or diarrhea) for 48 hours.

### **If I have norovirus, can I have visitors?**

Yes, your family and friends are welcome to visit you if they are feeling well. Your visitors are to follow the instructions on the sign posted on your door and clean their hands before and after visiting you.

### **If I have norovirus, is my family at risk?**

By taking precautions noted above, you can limit your risk of spreading norovirus to members of your home.

