

Take Precautions against Norovirus

What is Norovirus

Noroviruses (genus *Norovirus*, family *Caliciviridae*) are a group of related small non-enveloped viruses that cause acute gastroenteritis. Gastroenteritis is an inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines, causing an acute onset of severe vomiting and diarrhea. The illness is usually brief in people who are otherwise healthy. Young children, the elderly, and people with other medical illnesses are most at risk for more severe or prolonged infection.

Spread of Norovirus Among People

Noroviruses are highly contagious, with as few as 18 virus particles thought to be sufficient to cause infection. Noroviruses are transmitted primarily through the fecal oral route, either by direct person-to-person spread or fecally contaminated food or water. Noroviruses can also spread via a droplet route from vomitus. These viruses are relatively stable in the environment (It can survive 2-3 weeks outside the body). In healthcare facilities, transmission can also occur through hand via contact with materials, fomites and environmental surfaces that have been contaminated. Healthcare facilities and other institutional settings (e.g., daycare centres, schools, etc.) are particularly at-risk for outbreaks because of increased person-to-person contact.

Protecting Yourself and Others

In a healthcare facility, patients with suspected Norovirus may be placed in private rooms or share rooms with other patients with the same infection (cohorting). Additional prevention measures in healthcare facilities can decrease the chance of coming in contact with Noroviruses:

- Follow hand hygiene guidelines and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water
- Use gowns and gloves when in contact with patients who are symptomatic with Norovirus
- Routinely clean and disinfect high touch patient surfaces and equipment
- Use a registered Hospital Grade Disinfectant with an approved claim for Norovirus
- Remove and wash contaminated clothing or linens
- Employees who have symptoms consistent with Norovirus should be excluded from work



Signs and Symptoms in People

The symptoms of Norovirus illness usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. People may suddenly feel very sick and vomit frequently or have several episodes of diarrhea, but most people get better within 1 or 2 days and they have no long-term health effects related to their illness. Diarrhea is more common in children and vomiting is more common in adults.

*Good Hygiene Practices
Reduce Infection Risk*