

What kind of infection is it?

Norovirus is a virus.

How do people get infected?

- Norovirus is the most common cause of gastrointestinal illness in the US.
- There are 19-21 million cases of Norovirus each year in the US.
- Spread from touching things contaminated with the vomit or stool (poop) of an infected person. Norovirus is highly infectious – it only takes a tiny amount to cause illness.
- Contaminated food including shellfish and uncooked vegetables have been common sources.
- Can contaminate surfaces - people become infected by touching surfaces then placing hands in their mouth.
- Spreads easily and causes outbreaks in schools, nursing homes, and cruise ships.

What are the usual symptoms?

- Illness usually starts 10-70 hours after exposure.
- Sudden onset of vomiting and diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, and low-grade fever.

How long does it last?

- Typically 1-3 days but can last up to 7 days.
- Longer illness in young children and those with weakened immune systems or poor health.

How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. For young children, use a rehydration solution such as Pedialyte® or Rehydralyte®. Even a few sips or spoonfuls at a time can help. Sometimes anti-nausea medicines or IV hydration may be necessary if your child cannot keep down any fluids. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Because this is a viral infection, antibiotics do not help and may make the diarrhea worse.

Are there possible complications?

- Dehydration is the major complication.

Comments:

- Norovirus is very contagious and the virus is hard to kill.
- Wash hands carefully with soap and water after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, or cleaning up vomit or stool.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with disinfectant or bleach solution (5-25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water).
- Use gloves to handle soiled cloths or bedding. Wash with detergent and machine dry.
- People with diarrhea should not prepare food.

Resources:

- [CDC Handout](#)