

Norovirus or Noro-like Illness

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

because you or your child may have been exposed to a norovirus. If you believe your child may be ill with a norovirus, contact your medical provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your health care provider suspects or diagnoses a norovirus or a Noro-like illness.

for informational purposes only.

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a very contagious virus that infects the stomach and intestines. Sometimes people call it a “stomach bug” or “food poisoning”.

What are the symptoms of Norovirus?

People with norovirus can feel extremely ill and experience the following symptoms:

- Explosive vomiting (that shoots out)
- Watery, non-bloody, diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Fever*, chills, headache, muscle aches (*Fever is defined as: temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.)

The symptoms usually appear 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to the virus. Most people get better within 1 to 3 days but in young children the illness could last 4 to 6 days.

How is Norovirus spread?

Norovirus is found in the stool (poop) and vomit of infected people even before they start to feel sick. It spreads when someone:

- Eats food or drinks liquids that are contaminated with the norovirus.
- Touches surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then puts their hands into their mouth.
- Has direct contact with a person who is infected and showing symptoms. For example, when caring for, or sharing food, drinks, or eating utensils with, someone who is ill.

How contagious is Norovirus?

Norovirus is very contagious. People are most contagious from the time they begin feeling ill until at least 48 hours after their symptoms end. However, some people may be infected and contagious but not have

symptoms. Some people can be contagious for 2 weeks *after* they feel better because they can shed the virus in their stool (poop).

How is Norovirus diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually made based on a person's symptoms. Talk with your healthcare provider if you develop any of the Norovirus symptoms.

How is Norovirus treated?

Drink lots of fluids. Some people, especially the very young, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems, can become dehydrated and may need medical attention. Antibiotics and antiviral medications are not used to treat Norovirus.

How can we help to prevent Norovirus from spreading?

You can decrease your chance of becoming ill with norovirus, or of spreading it to others, by following these recommendations:

- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, especially after using the toilet, changing diapers, and helping children use the toilet.
- Wash hands before preparing, serving, or eating food.
- If possible, flush or discard any vomit and stool (poop) down the toilet.
- Clean and disinfect hard, non-porous surfaces (e.g. countertops, toilets, floors) contaminated with vomit or stool (poop).
- Thoroughly wash all dishes and utensils used by known ill persons with hot water (170° F) and soap. If this is not possible, disinfect the dishes and thoroughly rinse and rewash the dishes.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens contaminated after an episode of diarrhea or vomiting.
- Wash all raw fruits and vegetables.

Does my child need to stay home?

Any person who has 2 or more loose stools, or have vomited 2 or more times, within a 24-hour period needs to be excluded from child care until at least 24 hours, and preferably 48 hours, after symptoms end. Talk with your child care program for when your child can return as some child care and early learning programs may have more cautious illness exclusion policies.

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>
- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Ed. Pages 139-140

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