

Norovirus Quicksheet

December 2025

Background

Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Outbreaks are very common, especially in schools and Early Childhood Education Centers. Norovirus may also be referred to as “food poisoning,” “stomach flu,” or “stomach bug.”

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of norovirus are:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain

Other symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches

Symptoms typically last 1 to 3 days.

How Norovirus Spreads

Norovirus spreads via tiny particles of feces or vomit from an infected person. You can become infected by eating food or drink that has been contaminated, touching surfaces or objects that have been contaminated and then putting your fingers in your mouth, or having direct contact with someone who is infected.

How Contagious is Norovirus

Norovirus can be spread when you have symptoms, especially vomiting, and during the first few days after vomiting/diarrhea has ended.

Symptoms usually present themselves 24 to 48 hours after exposure.

Prevention

Hand sanitizer does not work well against norovirus!

Wash your hands with warm soap and water:

- After using the toilet
- Before eating, preparing, or handling food
- Before giving yourself or someone medicine

Clean and disinfect surfaces:

- Be sure to clean high traffic areas such as door handles, keyboards, shared objects such as toys or pencils

Cleaning solutions:

- Typical antimicrobial wipes do not kill norovirus
- Use 5 to 25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water as a disinfectant to clean surfaces

Stay home when sick!

When to stay home

If you have any symptoms of norovirus, you should isolate at home:

- Isolate at home until **48 hours after** the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea

