

Norovirus

Patient Information Leaflet

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus, sometimes also called the winter vomiting bug, is a stomach bug that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. Although it's sometimes called the winter vomiting bug, you can get Norovirus at any time of the year.

It can be very unpleasant but usually gets better in about 2 days (although symptoms can last longer in people who are already unwell).

It generally affects people in the community but can also affect hospital patients (particularly when patients are already infected but don't have any symptoms when admitted into hospital for another reason).

People may become infected with Norovirus multiple times in their lifetime.

Symptoms of Norovirus

The main symptoms of Norovirus usually start suddenly (within 1-2 days of becoming infected) and may include:

- feeling sick
- being sick (vomiting)
- diarrhoea

You may also have:

- a high temperature
- a headache
- tummy pain
- body aches and pains

How is it spread?

It can be spread in a number of ways, including:

- Close contact with someone with Norovirus
- Touching surfaces or objects that have the virus on them, then touching your mouth, allowing the bugs to be transferred to your gut
- Eating food that has been prepared or handled by someone with Norovirus.



What should I do if I get Norovirus?

Although it is unpleasant, it is rarely dangerous. There is no specific treatment or cure, and it is best to let the illness run its course.

However, if you are very young, elderly or have a weak immune system, you are more at risk of dehydration, so it is particularly important that you drink lots of fluids. If you think you are dehydrated, your symptoms are continuing beyond a few days or you become increasingly unwell, please contact NHS 111 or telephone your GP (home doctor) for advice.

To ease your symptoms, you can:

- take painkillers such as paracetamol to help ease any headaches, fever, and aching
- drink plenty of fluids so you do not become dehydrated
- If you are worried that you are becoming dehydrated, take rehydration drinks (available from your local pharmacy). These provide the correct balance of water, salt and sugar for your body.

How do we stop Norovirus spreading in hospitals?

Staff are trained in how to manage Norovirus and other diseases that can cause sudden, unexpected vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

This includes:

- Isolating patients with symptoms in a single room or dedicated multi-bed bay
 - Carrying out good hand hygiene by washing their hands with soap and water, and drying them thoroughly
 - Wearing appropriate personal protective clothing, such as gloves and aprons, for contact with vomit or diarrhoea
 - Collecting specimens of diarrhoea and sending them for testing as soon as possible
 - Educating patients and visitors about Norovirus symptoms and any precautions they need to take
 - Providing increased levels of cleaning, particularly in bathrooms and toilets, using disinfectants effective against Norovirus
 - Informing our infection prevention and control team, who can provide further advice as needed
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Can visiting in hospital continue?

If you have Norovirus and are receiving care in a single room, then you can continue to have visitors. However, as anyone can catch Norovirus, including visitors, they are advised to clean their hands thoroughly on entry to the ward and again before leaving your room, when they are advised to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Visitors are also discouraged from eating / drinking inside your hospital room, as this increases the risk to themselves of becoming infected.

During outbreaks of Norovirus, the hospital may restrict visiting to help control the outbreak and prevent further spread. If this is the case, visitors will be informed about this.

Visitors with symptoms of Norovirus themselves, such as diarrhoea and / or vomiting, are advised not to visit whilst symptomatic (unless essential). Please seek advice from a member of staff in this situation.

When can I be discharged from hospital?

Your medical team will discharge you when you are medically fit for discharge.



Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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