

## Visiting Advice

- Do not visit the hospital if you have had recent Norovirus or been in contact with somebody who has had the virus over the past 3 days.
- If there is an outbreak on the ward that you are visiting you may be asked to wear gloves and aprons. Please consult the nurse in charge.
- Only visit if necessary.
- Do not bring children under 12 to visit.
- Please make sure you wash your hands upon entering hospital areas and exiting hospital areas.
- No food and drink is to be brought onto the wards from outside the hospital. Only food provided by the hospital kitchen and hot drinks direct from the wards are permitted.

## Contact Information

**Infection Prevention & Control Team**  
**Contact Number:**

01553 613613

Ext 2326/3221

**For more information or advice please contact:**

- Your hospital doctor or nurse
- Your GP practice

Review Date: March 2019

**M784**

# Infection Prevention and Control

## Norovirus (Winter Vomiting)

Information for Patients and Relatives



## **What is Norovirus?**

Norovirus is a group of viruses that are the most common cause of gastroenteritis.

Norovirus in the past has also been given the name 'winter vomiting virus' and 'Norwalk' virus.

## **Symptoms of Norovirus**

The symptoms of the Norovirus Infection will usually begin around 12-48 hours after becoming infected and will last normally around 2 days.

This often starts with nausea and then the sudden onset of projectile vomiting along with watery diarrhoea. A raised temperature is also a factor along with headaches and aching limbs.

Most people will make a full recovery around 1-2 days, however, if you are very young or elderly sometimes it can take a bit longer due to dehydration.

## **How can it spread?**

Norovirus is a highly contagious bug that is easily transmitted from person to person by infected faeces and vomit. This happens if you

- have been exposed to the virus
- have not washed your hands having touched contaminated surfaces
- have eaten contaminated food

Only a few Norovirus particles are needed to cause it to spread around large numbers of people especially in schools, hospitals, nursing homes and hotels.

An outbreak of Norovirus can be difficult to control and long lasting as the virus is so contagious. Not only that, it is very easily transmitted from person to person.

## **How can an outbreak be stopped?**

The most effective way to minimise an outbreak is to restrict the amount of people in the infected area and to make sure you have good hand hygiene.

Alcohol gel does not kill the virus, so only use hot water and soap.

We also ask that you do not bring in any food and drink to prevent further transmission. Only drinks that are prepared by ward staff are permitted as well as food prepared from the hospital kitchen.

## **If I have Norovirus what should I do?**

To stop the spread of the Norovirus bug, it is suggested that you quarantine yourself until you are symptom free for at least 48 hours and do not come to the hospital as a visitor during this timeframe. If you have recently had Norovirus but are now symptom free, please tell the staff on the ward.

Good hygiene is very important in helping to prevent other people becoming infected. This includes:

- Thorough hand washing with soap and water before and after contact with any objects, people etc...
- A bleach based cleaner is recommended for toilets and hard surfaces

## **How can I help myself get better?**

If you do catch Norovirus the best thing for you to do is drink plenty of fluids to keep yourself hydrated. Also get plenty of rest and do not return to work or school until you are 48 hours clear of symptoms.

By staying at home you are restricting the spread of the virus!