

## What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a common cause of gastroenteritis. It is known as “the winter vomiting bug” but can be contracted at any time of the year. It does not usually cause serious illness, but it is very easily spread. People who contract it can be infectious for at least 48 hours after they recover.

## How is Norovirus spread?

- Person to person spread i.e. If you are in close contact with a person who is infected.
- Touch surfaces contaminated with norovirus.
- Foodborne: Food items can potentially transmit norovirus if it is handled or comes in contact with an infected food handler or is exposed to environmental contamination.
- Waterborne: water and ice are being increasingly recognised as a vehicle for transmission of norovirus.

symptoms of illness within 24-48 hours, but symptoms can occur suddenly, as early as 12 hours after exposure. People infected with Norovirus can pass on the infection from the moment they start feeling ill to at least two days after they have recovered. Some people may pass on the infection for as long as two weeks after recovery.



## What are the symptoms of Norovirus?

Often the symptoms occur without warning. The symptoms may include feeling sick, severe vomiting, stomach cramps, nausea and diarrhoea. Some people will have a rise in temperature, chills, muscle aches and headaches. The symptoms tend to last between 12 and 60 hours.

## Treatment

There is no specific treatment for norovirus apart from drinking plenty of clear fluids such as water or flat drinks to prevent dehydration. Because it is a virus antibiotics do not work. Most people make a full recovery. Some people (usually the very young or elderly) may become very dehydrated and need medical treatment.

If a patient has *Norovirus* we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital. This will help to stop the spread of Norovirus.

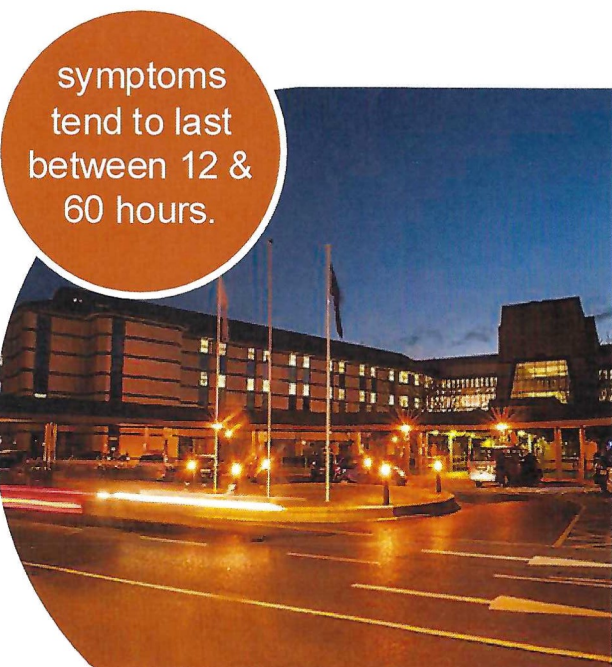
## What will happen if I develop these symptoms?

- The ward manager will contact the Infection Prevention & Control Team (IP&CT) and advice will be given regarding infection control measures to be taken - for example cleaning and disinfection in the ward area will be increased and the area that you are in may be closed to new admissions.

If a room or ward is closed you will see signs and red tape on the doors.

- Visiting may also be restricted or stopped to limit the spread of norovirus infection. Visiting may be permitted in special cases and only if agreed in advance with the ward manager. In the event of restricted visiting further information will be available at the hospital reception in the main atrium.
- Healthcare workers looking after you will be wearing aprons and gloves on entering your room. These will be removed after your care and hand hygiene performed. Healthcare workers will clean their hands before and after contact with each patient.

If you notice a failure in this practice you can ask the healthcare staff to clean their hands.



symptoms tend to last between 12 & 60 hours.

What can I do to help reduce the likelihood of spread ?

To reduce the likelihood of spread of Norovirus it is important to remember the following:

- If you become aware of a member of staff or a patient vomiting, alert your clinical nurse manager or a supervisor.
- Any soiling due to vomiting should be immediately cleaned up and the area decontaminated.
- Wash your hands regularly with hot water and soap before and after every patient contact, after using the toilet and when touching food. (Alcohol gel on its own is not sufficient)
- If you have a bout of vomiting or diarrhoea wash your hands with hot water and soap.

### Are there any risks to my family at home?

If you or a family member has symptoms of vomiting/diarrhoea:

- Use hot water and detergent to clean up any soiling and wash your hands afterwards.
- There is no specific treatment for Norovirus apart from sipping plenty of clear fluids such as water or flat lemonade.
- Try not to prepare food for other people if you have vomiting or diarrhoea.
- If you are concerned, telephone your GP

### Instructions for Visitors

- It is very easy to bring Norovirus into Hospitals. When Norovirus gets into hospitals it can cause serious problems, for example ward closures, cancelled operations and added pressure on the Emergency Department.
- Vulnerable patients can become very weak if they get Norovirus.
- Please cooperate with any precautions that may be taken, Including visiting restrictions.
- Do not visit the hospital if you have been suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea in the previous 48 hours.

### How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager, doctor or nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team and they will contact us.

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication

### References

- <http://www.hpsc.ie/az/vaccinpreventable/measles/factsheet/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>



Tallaght  
University  
Hospital

Ospidéal  
Ollscoile  
Thamhlachta

An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin

PATIENT  
INFORMATION  
LEAFLET

## Norovirus / Winter Vomiting Bug

