

Norovirus (Norwalk-Like Virus, or Noro infection)

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that causes inflammation of the inner lining of the stomach and the intestines. The illness often has a sudden and severe onset. It is also known as:

- stomach flu
- viral gastroenteritis
- acute gastroenteritis
- non-bacterial gastroenteritis
- food poisoning (although there are other causes of food poisoning); and
- calicivirus infection

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually begin 24 to 48 hours after exposure, but can appear as early as 12 hours, and may include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Abdominal cramps

In most people the illness is self-limiting, with symptoms lasting for about 1 or 2 days. Dehydration can occur.

How is it spread?

It is found in the stool and vomit of infected people, and can spread by:

- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated
- touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then placing hands in the mouth
- having direct contact with another person who is infected (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

What should I do if I have symptoms?

- Contact your healthcare provider.

Report food poisoning or stomach flu cases to Saint Louis County Department of Health by calling 314 615 1630

Who gets Norovirus infection?

Anyone can get Norovirus. Infants, young children, the elderly, and those immunocompromised are at greater risk of dehydration.

How is Norovirus diagnosed?

By testing a stool sample.

How is Norovirus treated?

Most people who have healthy immune systems will recover without treatment.

How can I prevent the spread of Norovirus?

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds:
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
 - Before eating or preparing foods.
 - After cleaning contaminated surfaces.
- Assist young children with hand washing.
- Properly dispose of dirty diapers.
- Do not send your child to daycare or preschool if he/she has diarrhea.
- Do not go to work if you are a health care worker, food handler, or day care worker if you have diarrhea.
- Do not prepare food for others during and for at least 2-3 days after recovery.
- Wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Do not swim while you have diarrhea.
- After an episode of illness immediately:
 - Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.
 - Remove & wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus (use hot water and soap).
 - Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces.
 - Wash hands.

For further information visit:

- www.foodsafety.gov
- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus.htm>