



Fact Sheet: Norovirus

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

What are noroviruses?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause gastroenteritis, sometimes called the “stomach flu.” Several other names have been used for noroviruses, including:

- Norwalk-like viruses (NLVs)
- Caliciviruses, and
- Small round structured viruses (SRSV)

What are the symptoms of the norovirus?

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Bloating
- Low-grade fever
- Chills
- Headache and muscle aches, and
- A general sense of tiredness

In most cases the illness is self-limiting and not affected by treatment with antibiotics. Norovirus illness usually begins 24 - 48 hours after exposure but can appear as early as 10 hours after exposure.

How is norovirus spread?

Noroviruses are very contagious and spread easily from person to person. The virus is found in the stool and vomit of infected people. People can become infected in several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated by infected food handlers, touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then touching their mouth before hand washing, or having direct contact with another person who is infected and then touching their mouth

before hand washing.

People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus.
 - Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth.
 - Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms
- How is Giardiasis treated?

How long are people contagious?

People infected with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least 3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as 2 weeks after recovery. Infected people do not become long-term carriers of norovirus.

People with norovirus should:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toilet visits and changing diapers and before eating or preparing food
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap)
- Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean

Currently, there is no antiviral medication that works against norovirus and there is no vaccine to prevent infection.