

# Fact Sheet: Norovirus

## What are Noroviruses?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause gastroenteritis (the stomach flu). Norovirus is very contagious and capable for living outside the human body for days or weeks and spreads easily from person to person.

## Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach cramping
- Low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness

Symptoms typically begin about 24-48 hours after exposure, but they may appear within 12 hours and usually last 1-2 days. People are contagious from the moment they become ill to at least three days after recovery.

## Prevention

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers and always before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly before eating them.
- People who are infected with Norovirus should not prepare food for others while they have symptoms and for three days after they recover from their illness. All contaminated surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected.
- Immediately remove and thoroughly wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or fecal matter.

## How is it spread?

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected persons. People become infected by:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus.
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then touching your mouth.
- Having direct contact with someone who is infected and showing symptoms. This can include caring for someone who is ill, sharing food or eating utensils.
- It can spread quickly in enclosed places like daycare centers, nursing homes, schools and cruise ships.

## Treatment

- There is no vaccine, antibiotic or specific medicine to prevent or treat Norovirus.
  - Norovirus cannot be treated with antibiotics because it is not a bacterial infection.
- Adults should drink clear liquids and avoid alcohol or caffeine.
- Infected children may be given oral rehydration fluid to prevent dehydration.
- If you or your family member at risk for dehydration, talk with your health care provider.

**Norovirus is the most common cause of stomach flu in the United States.**

This fact sheet is for informational purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional. For more information, about communicable disease speak to your health care provider or call the Ingham County Health Department at (517)-887-4308.

Visit our website at <http://hd.ingham.org/Home/CommunicableDisease.aspx>

or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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