

Patient Information Sheet

Norovirus

This patient information sheet has been produced to help patients and visitors understand Norovirus. It is aimed at answering some of the most frequently asked questions. If you have any further questions or comments please do not hesitate to ask any member of hospital staff.

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a common cause of gastro-enteritis (tummy bug) in both community and healthcare settings. The illness it causes is sometimes known as “winter vomiting disease”. Although cases appear in all seasons, there is often an increase in the virus in the winter months.

What are the symptoms?

The illness usually starts with a sudden onset of vomiting with little or no warning. Some people also develop diarrhoea and can also have a flu type symptoms and stomach cramps. Once infection, it can take 24-48 hours and most people make a full recovery.

How is Norovirus passed on?

Norovirus is passed on by contact with vomit or diarrhoea of an infected person. This could be from:

- Touching the hands of someone who has the virus and has not washed their hands after visiting the toilet.
- Touching any surfaces which have not been cleaned properly after being contaminated by the virus.
- Breathing in the virus from the air

How can it be treated?

There is no specific treatment. Recovery usually begins after 24 hours, it is important to prevent dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids.

How can these outbreaks be stopped?

Norovirus is usually transmitted from one person to another and the virus can survive in the environment. Patients with Norovirus should be isolated in a side room until 48 hours clear of symptoms. Sometimes it is necessary to restrict patients being moved around the hospital or to other care facilities such as Care Homes or other Hospitals.

Staff wear gloves and aprons when helping infection patients to prevent the spread of the virus to other patients.

Good hand washing with soap and water is important. Occasionally on a busy ward this can be overlooked. Do not be afraid to remind staff caring for you, **“it’s ok to ask”** them to wash their hands.

Your visitors will be advised not to visit if they are experiencing the same symptoms.

Who is at risk of getting Norovirus?

Norovirus can affect people of any age. Not only have there been outbreaks in hospital, people in schools, care homes and hotels have also been affected.

Further advice?

For further advice, please do not hesitate to ask any member of our staff.

You can get further information from:

Public Health England: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england