

For more information

You can find out more about Norovirus by:

- Asking your community hospital nursing staff or doctor
- Asking your GP or practice nurse.

Infection control

This leaflet is one in a series about infection control. Others in the series are:

- Preventing and controlling healthcare associated infections
- MRSA
- Clostridium difficile.

Your experiences

CSH Surrey is committed to putting people first and continually improving services through listening and responding to feedback. To share your experiences, please:

Call: 01306 646 223

Email: CSH.Feedback@nhs.net

Or write to the Governance Office address below.

Large print, audio format or another language

Call 01306 646 223

or email CSH.ns@nhs.net

to receive this information in large print, audio format or another language.

General enquiries

Visit www.cshsurrey.co.uk for information and contact details for all other CSH Surrey services.

A heart in the community

CSH Surrey, proud to be part of the CSH Group. As a social enterprise, CSH makes profit to benefit local communities and to enhance its health and care services.



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Norovirus (diarrhoea and vomiting virus)

Information for patients,
carers and relatives

Better healthcare together

CSH Surrey, providing NHS community nursing and therapy services in the homes, schools, clinics and hospitals in the heart of Surrey since 2006.

What is Norovirus?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that are a common cause of gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting). Norovirus is sometimes known as “winter vomiting virus”.

No specific groups of people are at risk of contracting Norovirus as it affects people of all ages. Outbreaks of the virus are reported frequently in places where large numbers of people congregate. This includes hospitals, schools, residential and nursing homes and cruise ships.

Norovirus often causes outbreaks because it is easily spread from one person to another. The virus is also able to survive in the environment for many days. Good hygiene is important in preventing others from becoming infected — this includes thorough hand washing before and after contact with an infected person.

How does Norovirus spread?

When people vomit or have diarrhoea, the Norovirus may enter the environment and land on surfaces and equipment. It can then be transmitted by contact with contaminated surfaces and objects. It can also be passed on by physical contact with an infected person.

Norovirus spreads easily in hospitals due to close contact between patients and staff. It is a highly infectious virus and therefore spreads quickly.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include sudden onset of nausea (feeling sick), followed by severe vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Some people may have a raised temperature, headaches and aching limbs.

How long do the symptoms last for?

Symptoms begin around 12 to 48 hours after becoming infected. The illness is self-limiting and usually lasts 12 to 60 hours. There are no long-term effects from Norovirus.

How is Norovirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for Norovirus infection – it gets better on its own. It is important to drink plenty of clear fluids to prevent dehydration.

If symptoms are severe, your doctor may prescribe anti-sickness medication and/or medication to lessen the diarrhoea.

Usually patients with Norovirus are nursed in isolation. This is to prevent the spread of the virus to other patients. Sometimes, if several patients have Norovirus, they will be nursed together in a ward bay.

Advice for visitors

- If you have had diarrhoea or vomiting, you should not come to the hospital to visit a friend or relative until you have been 48 hours clear since the last symptom of diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- Domestic dishwashers provide the safest and most efficient way of cleaning crockery and cutlery at home to prevent the spread of the virus.
- You may be asked to speak to the nursing staff when you enter a ward and before you visit your friend or relative.
- If your relative or friend is affected with diarrhoea and/or vomiting, you should only visit if it is absolutely necessary.
- You must wash your hands before and after visiting a patient who has diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Also, use the hand disinfectant when you enter and leave the ward.
- Please restrict your hospital visiting to one ward during an outbreak of Norovirus.
- Please do not visit any patients other than your own relative or friend.
- You do not need to put on gloves and aprons unless you are assisting with the personal care of a patient. Speak to the nursing staff about this.
- If the person you are visiting has diarrhoea and/or vomiting and you are taking home clothing to wash; the clothes should be placed in a water soluble bag which goes directly into the washing machine (so there is no need to touch soiled clothes). However you should wear rubber gloves if you handle the soiled clothes. A wash cycle of 60°C is recommended in a household washing machine.