

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment available, but the symptoms can be relieved by:

- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Taking Paracetamol for the fever and pain

Generally, the use of anti-diarrhoea medications is not necessary as the illness is short lived.

What about staying away from work/school/preschool?

Outbreaks frequently occur in institutional settings such as rest homes, preschools and workplaces, so the exclusion of those infected is vital to prevent further spread of the virus.

Sick people need to stay away from work/school/preschool until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours.

Check with your workplace (e.g. rest homes and hospitals) as they may have their own guidelines for exclusion from work.



Other resources available on gastrointestinal illnesses:

- Rotavirus
- Campylobacter
- Salmonella
- Giardia
- Cryptosporidium
- E. coli O157 (VTEC)

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Christchurch Office
76 Chester Street East
P.O Box 1475
Christchurch
Phone: 03 364 7844
Facsimile: 03 379 6125
Email: chic@cdhb.govt.nz

West Coast Office
3 Tarapuhi Street
P.O Box 443
Greymouth
Phone: 03 768 1160
Facsimile: 03 768 1169
Email: westcoast.chic@cdhb.govt.nz

Ashburton Office
Elizabeth Street
P.O Box 110
Ashburton
Phone: 03 307 6902
Facsimile: 03 307 8081
Email: ashburton.chic@cdhb.govt.nz

Timaru Office
18 Woollcombe Street
P.O Box 510
Timaru
Phone: 03 688 6019
Facsimile: 03 688 6091
Email: timaru.chic@cdhb.govt.nz

www.cph.co.nz

**Communicable Diseases
Community and Public Health**
(a division of the Canterbury District Health Board)

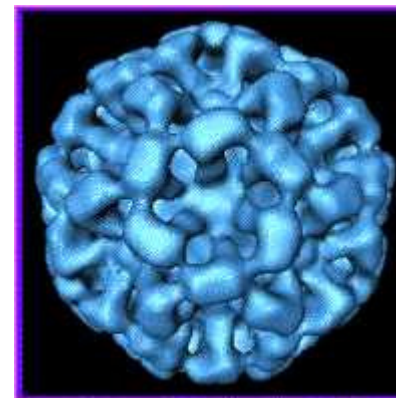
June 2010

Code/Reference: MED0171

Authorised By: Resource Approval Panel

NOROVIRUS

(Formerly Norwalk-like virus)



Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a common cause of vomiting and diarrhoeal (gastrointestinal) illness.

It is a major cause of:

- non-bacterial food and waterborne outbreaks world-wide
- gastrointestinal outbreaks in institutions such as childcare centres and rest homes

How is it caught?

Norovirus is spread by swallowing and/or breathing in droplets containing the virus from the faeces or vomit of an infected person.

The ways that this can occur include:

- Eating contaminated food and water
- Person to person via minute vomit droplets hanging in the air from a person that has vomited
- By touching contaminated surfaces

Norovirus can survive for weeks on surfaces such as walls, furnishings, light shades, carpet, walls etc.

What are the symptoms?

Norovirus is characterised by its rapid onset but short duration.

The illness may include all or any combination of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting (often projectile)
- Stomach cramps
- Diarrhoea
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle/joints aches and pains
- Nausea
- Lethargy (lack of energy)

Onset of symptoms occurs 10-50 hours (usually 24 hours) after exposure to an infected person, food or environment.

Symptoms may last for 24-60 hours.

A person can be infectious for 1-2 weeks from the start of illness.



How do you prevent spread?

From people:

- **Wash and dry hands thoroughly** using soap and water after going to the toilet, changing nappies, or caring for an infected person.
- Use of separate hand towels for sick people.
- Infected people should not prepare food.

From the environment:

Airborne droplets of vomit can spread over a large area and settle on any surface.

Therefore, cleaning needs to encompass a much wider area of at least a few metres than just the obviously affected area.

Clean as follows:

- Surfaces should be washed with soap and water to remove soiling before sanitising/disinfecting
- Chlorine based household bleaches are the most effective against this virus
- Always follow the manufacturers' instructions for correct dilution rates for sanitising/disinfecting
- Do not use bleach on surfaces that may leach colour i.e. carpet, furnishings