

# Norovirus Patient Information Leaflet

## What is Norovirus?

Norovirus or 'winter vomiting bug' is a virus causing vomiting and diarrhoea in hospitals, nursing homes and in the community. Even though it is called the winter vomiting bug, you can catch it at any time of year.

## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms start 1 to 2 days after you become infected and can come on suddenly and last for up to 2 or 3 days. The virus does not affect everyone the same way. Some people get diarrhoea while others get both diarrhoea and vomiting or nausea. These are the most common symptoms. A slight fever, headaches, painful stomach cramps and aching limbs can be experienced by some.

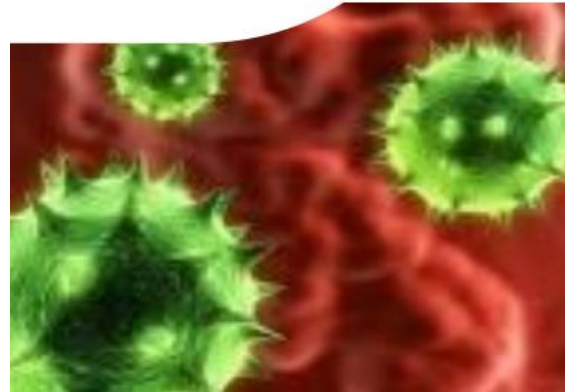
## What is the treatment for Norovirus?

Norovirus infection usually goes away on its own in a couple of days. The best thing to do is to stay at home, keep yourself hydrated and let it run its course. Antibiotics won't kill any virus. Taking medicine to stop diarrhoea is not advised if diarrhoea is caused by an infection. You don't need to get medical advice unless there is a risk of a more serious problem.

## How can I reduce the spread of Norovirus?

Norovirus spreads very easily. This can happen if you are in close contact with someone with norovirus by breathing in small particles containing the virus, by touching contaminated surfaces or

objects or by eating contaminated food. You are most infectious when symptoms start until 48 hours after all the symptoms are gone. Restrict contact with other people including visiting hospitals and nursing homes, until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea and vomiting. If you have to visit an emergency department or a GP, inform them in advance. Clean your hands frequently and thoroughly with liquid soap and water. Don't share towels or face cloths. Any surfaces or objects that could be contaminated needs to be disinfected afterward. Bed linen and clothes that could be contaminated should be washed separately on a hot wash.



## How long will I carry Norovirus for?

Although you can carry norovirus for a few weeks or months after infection, you are infectious only for a short time before and after all the symptoms have gone. You can become sick with the virus more than once because the virus is always changing and your body is unable develop long term resistance to it.