

IPC NEWS

Norovirus

SAY 'NO' TO...
'NO'ROVIRUS



What is Norovirus?

Also known as the 'winter vomiting bug', it's a common gastrointestinal infection. Norovirus can occur throughout the year but is most common from mid-October through to April.

Symptoms

Symptoms are distinctive, presenting as a sudden onset of watery diarrhoea and/or vomiting, which can often be projectile.

Other symptoms may include:

- abdominal cramps
- headaches
- muscle aches/pains
- high temperature
- tiredness



How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for Norovirus. The elderly are most at risk of dehydration and it is important to encourage, help and prompt residents to drink fluids frequently to stay hydrated. Symptoms usually resolve after 2 - 3 days, however around 40% of people can still be symptomatic after 4 days.

How is it spread?

Norovirus spreads easily in enclosed environments such as care homes, it is highly infectious and easily spread through:

- contact with an infected person
- contact with contaminated environment or object
- eating or drinking contaminated food or water

You can prevent the spread of infection by:

- isolating the affected person (if safe to do so), this should be until they are 48 hours clear of symptoms
- providing a dedicated toilet/commode whilst symptomatic
- washing hands with liquid soap, water and drying them with paper towels, before and after every care episode and before entering and leaving the residents room. **Do not use alcohol hand rub, this is not effective against Norovirus!**
- wearing disposable gloves and aprons when caring for the affected person, handling contaminated linen and cleaning
- washing hands after removal of gloves and aprons
- at least twice daily cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces (using a chlorine releasing disinfectant at a concentration of 1000ppm)

Did you know...

Norovirus can survive on surfaces for at least one week, and on refrigerated food for ten days.

Norovirus affects 1 million people in the UK each year.

Norovirus is highly contagious, one to two people affected can expose ten to twenty people.

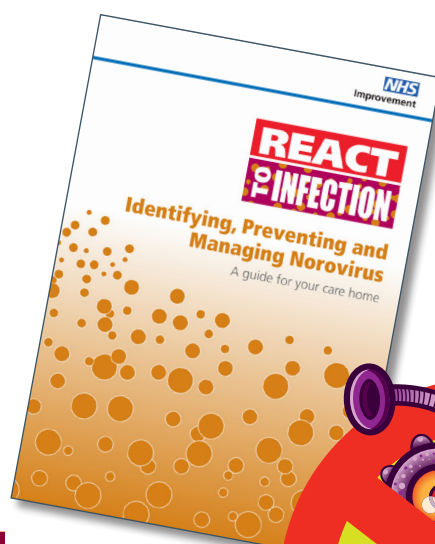
What to do if you suspect an outbreak

A norovirus outbreak is declared when there are two or more people with the same symptoms in the same care setting within a 48 hour period. It is important to assess if the symptoms are part of the person's condition or related to medications.

Protect residents by being prepared and vigilant. If control measures are implemented early, this can prevent the spread of infection to others. If you suspect you may have an outbreak, **report it to the IPC service: 0151 604 7750.**

NHS Improvement have produced a number of useful resources to support care homes, see the link below for further guidance:

<http://www.reactto.co.uk/resources/react-to-infection/>



Remember...



What would you like to see in our next newsletter?

Let us know by email to IPC.wirralct@nhs.net or call 0151 604 7750.

Infection Prevention & Control Service:
St Catherine's Health Centre, Derby Road,
Birkenhead, CH42 0LQ