

## Norovirus (Nor-O-VI-rus)

### What is norovirus?

Norovirus is a very common virus that causes diarrhea and vomiting in humans. Norovirus is commonly responsible for outbreaks in places where people are in close proximity to each other such as long-term care and retirement homes, childcare centers, banquets, cruise ships, schools, and restaurants.

### How norovirus is spread?

Norovirus is very contagious and can be spread easily through human-to-human contact and food. The “fecal-oral” route is the main source of transmission. It is also spread by touching contaminated surfaces and through the air, which is why it can spread so quickly in a social group setting.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually appear one to two days after you have been exposed to the virus. Symptoms usually happen quickly and include watery non-bloody diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and nausea. A low-grade fever may occur and dehydration is possible. The symptoms usually last one to two days; however, the virus can still be spread for up to two days after the symptoms stop.

Recovery is usually complete with no serious long-term complications. Immunity against the virus is unclear and short. For some, immunity may last up to 14 weeks. The incidence of illness does occur year round, however it is higher in the fall and winter.

### How to prevent norovirus infections?

- Thorough hand washing is the best prevention. Make sure your hands are properly washed after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing food.
- People ill with diarrhea and other Norovirus symptoms should avoid being around others.
- Carefully dispose of feces, and any materials contaminated with feces and/or vomit.
- Clean and sanitize washrooms and all hand contact surfaces once daily or as often as needed.