

What happens when I go home?

When you return home it is important for you, your family and your friends to continue the good hand hygiene practices that you have been taught in hospital.

When can my child return to school, pre-school / kindergarten, or team sports?

Your child should not go to child care, school or work for at least 48 hours after diarrhoea or vomiting stops.

Where can I get further information?

You can talk to your doctor or the nursing staff. If you wish to speak with the Infection Control Department ask your nurse to contact us.

References

NSW Department of Health, 2018. Norovirus Patient Fact Sheet.
QLD health. Childrens health Queensland Hospital and Health Service. Fact sheet. Nov 2015



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MR0024462 RHC CGU Patient Information - Norovirus DL 0221

Norovirus
Patient Information



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What is Norovirus?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that can cause gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines) with diarrhoea, stomach pain and vomiting. Common names used for gastroenteritis due to norovirus are 'gastric flu' or 'stomach flu', 'winter vomiting' and 'viral gastro'.

Who is at risk from norovirus infections?

Anyone can become infected with these viruses. There are many different strains of norovirus, which makes it difficult for a person's body to develop long-lasting immunity. Therefore, norovirus illness can recur throughout a person's lifetime. People working in day-care centres or nursing homes should pay special attention to children or residents who have norovirus illness. This virus is very contagious and can spread rapidly throughout such environments.

How can norovirus be spread?

Noroviruses are found in the faeces or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth
- small airborne particles from projectile vomiting
- having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill)

How will my care change whilst in hospital?

- You will be managed using infection control contact precautions until you are free of diarrhoea for 48 hours.
- A sign is placed outside your door to alert hospital staff for the need to use protective infection control contact precautions. This sign also alerts visitors of the need to speak with nursing staff prior to entering your room.
- The hospital staff will wear protective clothing such as gloves and an apron or gown when they enter your room. These items are disposed of in a separate waste bin as the staff member leaves your room.

Symptoms of norovirus

Symptoms of norovirus illness usually begin about 24 to 48 hours after ingestion of the virus, but they can appear as early as 12 hours after exposure. The symptoms of norovirus illness usually include:

- Nausea and Vomiting
- Diarrhoea and some stomach cramping
- Low-grade fever and Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches and lethargy

The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting only about 1 or 2 days, but can last longer. In general, children experience more vomiting than adults.

Prevention

You can decrease your chance of coming in contact with noroviruses by following these preventive steps:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toilet visits and changing nappies and before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Flush or discard any vomitus or faeces in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.
- Use a detergent and hot water to wipe down the area where vomit was present so that no evidence of vomit is visible.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus (use hot water and soap).

Good hand hygiene practices

Hand Hygiene is the most effective way to prevent ALL infections, including the flu and the common cold. Encourage your family and friends to maintain good hand hygiene practices every day.

Can I still have visitors?

Yes – you can still have visitors however you should limit your contact with others until you have had 48 hours without diarrhoea. Encourage your visitors to perform hand hygiene before and after they enter your room using soap and water.