

Norovirus

WHAT IS NOROVIRUS?

Norovirus is the leading cause of vomiting and diarrhea, and foodborne illness in the United States. Commonly known as the “stomach bug,” it is a highly contagious virus that can infect anyone.

Those most at risk of infection include:

- Children younger than 5 years
- People 65 years and older

HOW IS NOROVIRUS TRANSMITTED?

- Touching contaminated objects and sharing food, drink and other items with an infected person.
- It spreads easily and quickly, so take extra caution when visiting daycares, nursing homes, schools.
- If you are sick, stay home and limit contact with others.
- After you have recovered, it is important to be aware that traces of the virus may continue to be present in your poop for up to two weeks.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF NOROVIRUS INFECTION?

Symptoms vary depending on the person infected and their own medical history. Common symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach Cramping
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dehydration

HOW DO I PREVENT NOROVIRUS CONTAMINATION?

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom, changing diapers. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will not kill this virus.
- Use chlorine bleach to disinfect common household surfaces and areas with vomit, such as the bathroom and toilet.
- Ensure foods are cooked properly, especially seafood (internal temperature above 145 degrees).
- Avoid preparing food and drink for others while sick.



Norovirus is tough! It survives freezing temperatures and disinfectants, so be extra cautious to stop its spread, especially in crowded places.

TREATMENT FOR NOROVIRUS

There is no direct treatment. Staying hydrated and getting plenty of rest is key for recovery. Drinks, such as Pedialyte, can help treat mild dehydration, however, more serious cases should be reviewed by your primary care provider.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

People who work in settings with a high risk of spreading infections, such as:

- Restaurants
- Health care facilities
- Daycares

should wait until they have been free of symptoms for 72 hours before returning.

Children who attend daycare or school should stay home until vomiting and diarrhea have stopped.



IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH NOROVIRUS, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.