



Public Health Division
Mary Maddux-Gonzalez, MD, MPH
Health Officer & Division Director

Information for Health Care Workers and other Employees

There have been cases of norovirus gastroenteritis in this health care facility. It is important for health care workers and other employees to recognize symptoms of this highly infectious disease and to take the following steps to prevent the spread of norovirus disease among employees, patients and visitors.

What is Norovirus?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the “stomach flu” or gastroenteritis. The illness is usually brief with symptoms lasting 1 or 2 days.

What are the Symptoms of Norovirus?

Norovirus illness can occur 10-48 hours after exposure. Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramping. Low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and a general sense of tiredness can be early warning symptoms.

Why is Norovirus so Infectious?

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. For example, vomit contains millions of virus particles. It takes 1-2 particles to become ill.

If a person forcefully vomits, particles can extend 5-15 ft & aerosolize. 60-70% of those directly exposed or exposed shortly after an incident can develop norovirus.

What can you do to prevent Norovirus?

- Wash Hands Often. Use soap and water, hand gels are **not** effective against norovirus
- If you are well and work at more than one facility: you should shower, change clothes and cleanse shoes before reporting to your next job.
- **Do not come to work** with symptoms of norovirus. If ill, go home and do not return to work until you are symptom free for at least 24 hours. The virus may still be excreted in your stool for 2 or more weeks. Good hand hygiene is essential. Please report to employee health for clearance.
- Do not share food in common break room
- Break rooms and bathroom need to be cleaned regularly
- If you vomit @ work, immediately notify your supervisor of illness & location of vomit so that the area can be cleaned appropriately
- If vomiting occurs in a common area, clear the area immediately of patients/staff until an appropriate environmental clean up has been completed.
- If vomiting occurred in a bathroom, close bathroom to common use until environmental clean up has been completed.

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