

Advice on Norovirus ('Winter Vomiting Bug') for residents in temporary reception centres for displaced people fleeing war in Ukraine

What is norovirus?

Norovirus (or Winter Vomiting Bug) is a virus that is a very common cause of gastroenteritis.

What are the symptoms of norovirus ?

Norovirus symptoms include:

- Nausea (often sudden onset)
- Vomiting (often forceful – 'projectile')
- Watery diarrhoea and
- A temperature.

Symptoms begin around 12 to 48 hours after becoming infected. The sickness is short – it lasts only about 1 or 2 days. However, some people (usually the very young or elderly) may become very dehydrated (dry) and may need to go to hospital.

Are noroviruses contagious?

Noroviruses are very contagious and can spread easily from person to person. Both vomit and stools from an infected person contain the virus. People infected with norovirus are infectious from the moment they begin feeling ill until 48 hours after they stop having vomiting and diarrhoea.

It is important for people to wash their hands well when they are sick, and after they have recently recovered from norovirus illness.

How does norovirus spread?

People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- Coming in contact with an infected person e.g. when caring for someone with norovirus
- Coming in contact with contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their mouth
- In settings such as hospitals, reception centres and hotels, ill staff and residents can spread the virus to other people or contaminate surfaces through hand contact
- Eating contaminated food.

Who is at risk of getting norovirus?

Norovirus infection affects people of all ages. People can get norovirus infection more than once.

How is norovirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for norovirus – people recover on their own. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

If I'm suffering from norovirus, how can I prevent others from becoming infected?

Good hygiene is important in preventing others from becoming infected - this includes thorough hand washing (see below). Food preparation should also be avoided until 2 days after symptoms have stopped.

Are there any long-term effects?

No, there are no long-term effects from norovirus.

What can be done to prevent infection with norovirus?

- Frequent handwashing (see Handwashing below) including after using the toilet, changing nappies and before eating or preparing food.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomit and/or stools in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

When should you wash your hands?

Regular hand-washing with soap and warm running water for at least 15 seconds (the time it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice), then drying with a disposable paper towel, is the most effective way of reducing spread of norovirus. Always wash your hands with soap and running water and especially:

- After using or cleaning the toilet
- After being in contact to anyone with diarrhoea or vomiting
- After touching anything contaminated by diarrhoea or vomiting
- After handling contaminated clothing or bedding (including nappies)
- After handling household and garden waste or rubbish
- After touching or handling pets or other animals
- On returning to the house having been working in the garden or on the farm
- Before handling, preparing, serving, or consuming food or drink.

****If you are in a reception centre and you develop vomiting, be sure and tell the supervisor, so that cleaning can be organised quickly.****

See [here](#) for full advice on how to clean up and decontaminate after someone has vomited.