

NOROVIRUS (NORWALK-LIKE VIRUSES)

Noroviruses cause gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and small and large intestines.

Norovirus is often incorrectly called the “stomach flu”, although it is not caused by the influenza virus.

CAUSE

Norovirus (previously known as calicivirus, Norwalk virus, or Norwalk-like virus).

SYMPTOMS

Watery diarrhea and vomiting. In addition, fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and stomach cramps can occur. The illness can be mild to moderately severe with symptoms usually lasting 24 to 48 hours.

SPREAD

The viruses leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. People can also get sick by eating food items contaminated during preparation or serving. Aerosolized spread from vomiting is possible.

Person-to-person spread often occurs within families, schools, nursing homes, cruise ships, in childcare settings, and communities.

INCUBATION

It takes 10 to 50 hours, usually from 24 to 48 hours, from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

While the symptoms are present and up to 72 hours after vomiting and/or diarrhea has stopped.

DIAGNOSIS

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has symptoms to discuss whether laboratory tests need to be done to determine the cause.

EXCLUSION

Childcare and School: Until diarrhea and vomiting have stopped for 24 hours. Exclusion may be longer during an outbreak.

Individuals with vomiting and/or diarrhea should NOT use pools, swimming beaches, recreational water parks, spas, or hot tubs for at least 72 hours (3 days) after diarrhea and/or vomiting symptoms have stopped.

Staff in sensitive duties must avoid food preparation when diarrhea and vomiting are present and for at least 3 days after diarrhea and/or vomiting have stopped.

TREATMENT

Vomiting and diarrhea may lead to dehydration, which may become a medical emergency. Ask a healthcare provider how to prevent dehydration.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after using the toilet and changing diapers and before preparing or eating food.

Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

Staff should closely monitor hand washing of all children after children have used the bathroom or have been diapered.

- Clean and disinfect diapering area and potty chairs after each use and bathroom toilets, sinks, and toys at least daily and when soiled. (See IV-4 through IV-6)

- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled. (See IV-4 through IV-6)

- Clean and disinfect 25 feet surrounding all public vomiting incidents (see section IV)

For more information, please contact your local health department.

[Carson City Health & Human Services](#) (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon Counties) 775-434-1690 & 775-887-2190 (after hours)

[Central Nevada Health District](#) (Churchill, Mineral, Eureka, Pershing Counties) 775-866-7535

[Northern Nevada Public Health](#) (Washoe County) 775-328-2447 (24 hours)

[Southern Nevada Health District](#) (Clark County) 775-759-1300 (24 hours)

[Division of Public and Behavioral Health](#) (All other Counties) 775-400-0333 (24 hours)

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