

NOROVIRUS

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a group of viruses which can produce an inflammation of the intestinal tract, with symptoms of nausea, diarrhea and vomiting. It is a common water and foodborne illness that can occur in all age groups. It is usually a self-limited, mild to moderate illness lasting 24-60 hours with an average incubation period of 12-48 hours.

How is it spread?

Norovirus is very contagious and can be spread easily by:

- eating or drinking food or water contaminated by persons infected with norovirus
- having direct contact with a person infected with norovirus.
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then touching their mouth before handwashing
- contamination of food or water can occur when raw sewage pollutes the water
- eating food from contaminated waters such as oysters and clams
- foods commonly contaminated that have been implicated in widespread outbreaks are: salad dressings, cake frosting, salads, raspberries, raw shellfish, sandwiches.
- The virus is spread during the acute stage of the illness and up to 48 hours after diarrhea stops.

How is it treated?

- Norovirus can be diagnosed by checking a stool sample. Lab testing is difficult and is done only if there is an apparent outbreak
- Usually the primary treatment is to replace fluids lost due to diarrhea.

How is it prevented?

- Practice good personal hygiene and hand washing.
- Use safe food and water supplies.
- Cook foods thoroughly.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before serving.
- Environmental disinfection with chlorine solution.

SYMPTOMS OF NOROVIRUS

- nausea
- vomiting--acute onset
- abdominal pain/cramps
- diarrhea--watery, non-bloody
- low-grade fever

**LIVINGSTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
2300 E. GRAND RIVER AVE., SUITE 102, HOWELL, MI 48843-7578
(517) 546-9850
www.lchd.org**