

## **What is Norovirus?**

- A gastrointestinal infection and the most common cause of viral gastroenteritis in humans.

## **How does a person get Norovirus?**

- The virus is found in the stool and vomit of infected persons. The virus then has to enter the mouth of another person in order to infect them. This can happen by:
  - person-to-person contact (ie: by sharing foods with infected persons, changing diapers of infected persons).
  - drinking water or eating food which are contaminated with the virus.
  - contact with contaminated surfaces or objects such as doorknobs, light switches, railings, sink taps, telephones.
  - spread through the air when an infected person vomits.
- Outbreaks of Norovirus commonly occur in group living facilities such as long-term care facilities, hospitals, schools, cruise ships, and where groups of people gather in close proximity.
- This virus is often the cause of foodborne outbreaks.

## **What are the signs and symptoms?**

- Symptoms develop quickly and may include abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and low grade fever.
- Symptoms usually develop 12 to 48 hours after a person has become infected.
- The illness usually lasts 24 to 48 hours.

## **How is Norovirus treated?**

- Most people recover on their own without treatment.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace water lost through diarrhea. If more severe, see your doctor.

## **How is Norovirus prevented?**

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 15 seconds:
  - after using the toilet
  - after diapering a child
  - after assisting an ill person
  - after handling pets or animals
  - before preparing or handling food
  - before and after eating.
- Clean then disinfect all high hand contact surfaces thoroughly especially sink taps, toilet handles, railings, doorknobs, light switches, telephones and counters. To disinfect for Norovirus use:
  - 0.5% accelerated hydrogen peroxide **or**
  - a fresh solution of 1 part bleach\* to 9 parts water **or**
  - a professional healthcare grade disinfecting bleach wipe(always follow manufacturer's instructions)
- Steam clean rugs or fabrics (ie: couch) if they become soiled with vomit or stool.

\*household bleach containing 5% sodium hypochlorite

## **What if my child or I have symptoms?**

- Do not attend daycare, school or place of work while symptoms are present and for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.
- Persons who prepare food (ie: cook), are **not to attend** work while symptoms are present and for 72 hours after symptoms have stopped, or as directed by Public Health.

## **Where can I find handwashing Resources?**

- Visit [www.germsmart.ca](http://www.germsmart.ca)

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For more information contact the Provincial Health Information Line at **811**  
or Population and Public Health at **306-655-4612**

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