Norovirus Overview
Overview

- Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea.
- Anyone can get infected and sick with norovirus.
- Sometimes called the “stomach flu” or “stomach bug”.
- Seasonality - winter - typically November to April.

Figure: Burden of Norovirus in the United States. Estimates of the annual number of illnesses and associated outcomes for norovirus disease in the U.S., across all age groups.
How Noro Spreads - Contaminated Food

- A person with norovirus touches food with their bare hands.
- Food is placed on a counter or surface that has poop or vomit particles on it.
- Tiny drops of vomit from a person with norovirus spray through the air and land on the food.
- Food is grown with contaminated water, such as oysters, or fruit and vegetables are watered with contaminated water in the field.
How Noro Spreads - Contaminated Water

Recreational or drinking water can get contaminated with norovirus:

• At the source such as when a septic tank leaks into a well.
• When a person with norovirus vomits or poops in the water.
• When water isn’t treated properly, such as with not enough chlorine.
How Noro Spreads - Sick People/Surfaces

• A person with norovirus touches surfaces with their bare hands.

• Food, water, or objects that are contaminated with norovirus are placed on surfaces.

• Tiny drops of vomit from a person with norovirus spray through the air, landing on surfaces or entering another person’s mouth.

• A person with norovirus has diarrhea that splatters onto surfaces.
Symptoms

Common symptoms:
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain

Other symptoms:
- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
Symptoms

• A person usually develops symptoms 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to norovirus.

• Most people with norovirus illness get better within 1 to 3 days, but they can still spread the virus for a few days after.

• Someone with noro can feel extremely ill, and vomit or have diarrhea many times a day.
  • This can lead to dehydration, especially in young children, older adults, and people with other illnesses.
  • Children who are dehydrated may cry with few or no tears and be unusually sleepy or fussy.
Prevention - Handwashing

• Hand sanitizer does not work well against norovirus. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially:
  • After using the toilet or changing diapers.
  • Before eating, preparing, or handling food.
  • Before giving yourself or someone else medicine.

• If you had norovirus, continue washing your hands often after you feel better.

• Norovirus can be found in vomit or feces prior to symptoms and can linger and spread for two weeks after the illness resolves.
Prevention - Safe Food Handling

Do not prepare and handle food or care for others when you are sick

Before preparing and eating food:

- Wash fruits and vegetables well.
- Cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 145°F.
- Routinely clean and sanitize kitchen utensils, counters, and surfaces.

Be aware that:

- Noroviruses are relatively resistant to heat and can survive temperatures as high as 145°F.
- Quick steaming processes may not heat foods enough to kill noroviruses.
- Food that might be contaminated with norovirus should be thrown out.
Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

Clean and disinfect surfaces

- Wear rubber or disposable gloves and wipe the entire area with paper towels and throw them in a plastic trash bag.
- Disinfect the area as directed on the product label.
- Leave the bleach disinfectant on the affected area for at least 5 minutes.
- Clean the entire area again with soap and hot water.
- Wash laundry, take out the trash, and wash your hands.

Wash laundry well

- Immediately remove and wash clothes or linens that may have vomit or poop on them.
- Wear rubber or disposable gloves.
- Handle items carefully without shaking them.
- Wash the items with detergent and hot water at the maximum available cycle length and then machine dry them at the highest heat setting.
- Wash your hands after with soap and water.
Treatment

• Drink plenty of fluids to help prevent dehydration.

• If someone can’t drink enough fluids to rehydrate, they may need to receive IV fluids.

• Your provider may recommend anti-diarrheal or nausea medication.

• Practice self-care:
  • Rest
  • Avoid caffeine and alcohol
  • Eat small bland meals such as soda crackers, toast, gelatin, bananas, applesauce, rice and chicken.
  • Avoid contact with others as much as possible until several days after recovery.