



# Norovirus

## What is Norovirus?

- Norovirus is a very contagious source of non-bacterial diarrhea and vomiting.
- The illness can occur at any time of the year but is most common in the fall and winter months.
- Norovirus outbreaks commonly occur in areas where people are in close proximity to one another such as nursing homes, childcare centres, banquets, cruise ships, schools, and restaurants.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Sudden onset include watery diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, headache, or low grade fever.
- Can last for 24 to 48 hours. The virus can be spread up to 48 hours after the symptoms stop and in some people up to two weeks.

## How is Norovirus spread?

- Norovirus is found in the feces or vomit of infected people.
- Others can become infected with the virus by direct contact with the person who is ill and by touching contaminated surfaces or objects e.g. door handles, shopping carts.
- Contaminated water, raw shellfish and other foods have also been identified in outbreaks.

## How to decrease the spread?

- Thorough hand washing is the best prevention. Make sure that the hands are thoroughly washed after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing food.
- Immunity following the infection is usually short term lasting up to 14 weeks.
- Any clothing or linens that have been contaminated should

be carefully removed as soon as possible, and washed in a hot water cycle at the maximum length of time.

- Persons ill with norovirus should avoid being around others.
- If you think you are infected with norovirus, do not prepare food for other people.

## Recommended absence:

- Stay home if you are ill.
- If you are an employee of an institution, day care or daycare attendee, or you are a food handler, further restrictions may include staying home until you are symptom free for a 48 hour period.

Norovirus is **not** be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as required by the Health Promotion and Protection Act.

## Reference

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/food-poisoning/norovirus.html>

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[www.hnhss.ca](http://www.hnhss.ca)

519-426-6170 • 905-318-6623 • 519-582-3579

Health and  
Social Services  
Haldimand and Norfolk