

Please do not visit patients if you or other members of your household have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting within the past 48 hours. If you or other members of your household have suffered with these symptoms within the past 48 hours, and you are attending hospital, please inform the hospital before you attend.

Remember these main points:

- Norovirus causes diarrhoea and vomiting
- It spreads easily
- It is rarely serious but symptoms can last up to two days or sometimes longer
- Hand washing and isolation is the key to the prevention of infection

Any questions?

If you need further information or advice please ask your nurse or doctor.

Being open

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infection a number of things have been implemented across the Trust:

- A dedicated team responsible for helping staff maintain a high standard of care in Infection Prevention and Control

- A comprehensive Infection Control and Prevention policy which is evidence based and regularly reviewed
- All staff are required to attend a yearly education and training update
- A wide range of information leaflets have been produced for patients, carers and the public
- Infection rates are monitored across the trust, any risks or trends identified are reported monthly to the Infection Control and Prevention committee, the Trust Board and Public Health England

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

For Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Tel: **0121 371 3785** (internal **13785**)

For Heartlands Hospital, Good Hope Hospital and Solihull Hospital
Tel: **0121 424 1137**

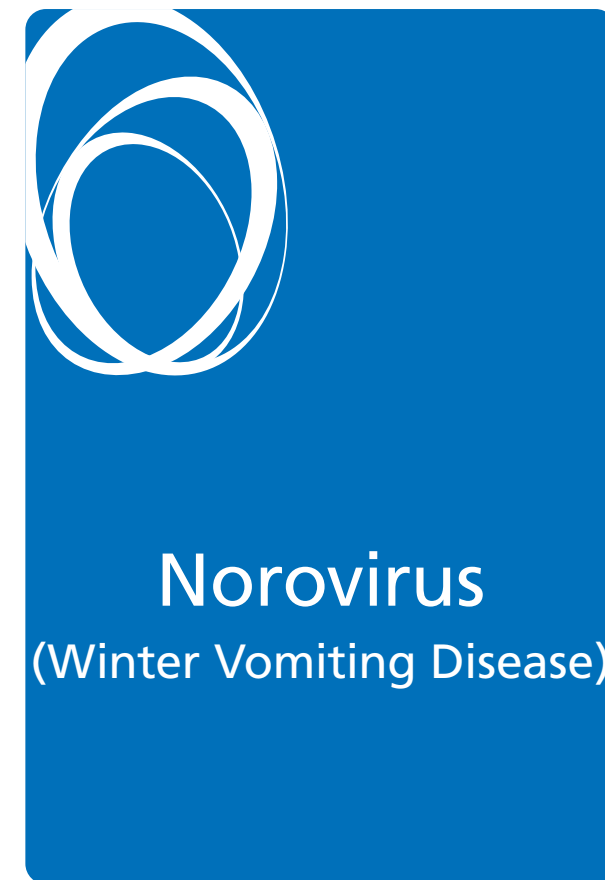


The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

Infection Prevention and Control
University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust



University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust



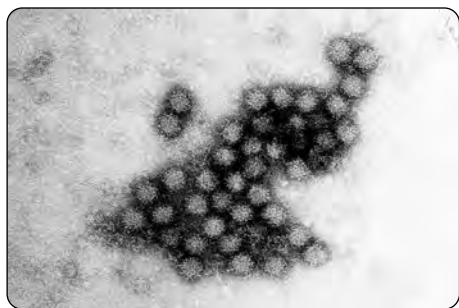
Building healthier lives

UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is the most common cause of gastrointestinal infection in the UK. Gut infections are also known as gastroenteritis. It only affects humans and there are up to 1 million cases every year. There is usually a peak of the infection during the winter months, which is why it is sometimes called “the winter vomiting bug”.



What are the symptoms?

The incubation period is usually 24 to 72 hours. The symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting (often sudden and severe)
- Diarrhoea

Although this is an unpleasant illness, it is rarely dangerous. Usually symptoms last for up to two days and most people make a full and speedy recovery. In most cases no specific treatment is required, but it is sensible to drink plenty of clear fluids (such as water) as soon as the vomiting starts, to avoid dehydration.



How is it spread?

Norovirus is spread extremely easily from one person to another (rather like the common cold). We cannot see the virus so it is important to understand how we can catch it.

You can catch Norovirus by:

- Not washing hands after using the toilet
- Being exposed to the virus or the vomit of someone who has the virus
- Touching surfaces (such as furniture or other people's hands) that have the virus on them
- Eating contaminated food

Only a few virus particles are needed to cause illness in a susceptible person. Infection can spread very easily in areas where there are large numbers of people such as schools, nursing homes, hospitals, hotels and cruise ships.

People with Norovirus remain infectious for up to 48 hours after symptoms have finished.

How can we prevent it?

The virus spreads so quickly and easily, therefore not all infections can be prevented. However, the following measures will reduce the chance of it spreading.

Good hand washing with liquid soap and water is the key to the prevention of Norovirus infection. Alcohol hand rub has limited effect on Norovirus therefore hands must be washed with soap and water when entering and leaving a ward. (There is a hand sanitizer available which works well in hospital areas.) Hands must be washed before handling food and after visiting the toilet. Anyone with diarrhoea should not prepare or handle the food of others.

Cleaning surfaces: The virus can remain active for days on floors and surfaces so vomit or diarrhoea must be cleaned up straight away. Hospital surfaces are cleaned with bleach.

Isolating people with the virus: If a large number of patients are affected, we may need to close the ward. Other important measures to prevent the infection spreading include restricting visitors. Visitors should contact the ward to get permission from the nurse in charge to visit. Please note: If you are visiting a ward where there are cases of Norovirus, you are at risk of catching the infection and of spreading it to other people.