

Norovirus-“The Stomach Bug”

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that causes gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines). This leads to diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Other symptoms may include fever, headache, and body aches. Norovirus illness is not related to the flu (influenza) although they share some of the same symptoms. The flu (influenza) is a respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. The CDC estimates that each year Norovirus causes 19 to 21 million illnesses, 56,000 to 71,000 hospitalizations and 570 to 800 deaths.

Anyone can get infected with norovirus and you can get it more than once. People usually get sick with norovirus in cooler months, especially from November to April. 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. Norovirus is a highly contagious virus. You are contagious from the moment you begin feeling sick and for the first few days after you recover. Norovirus spreads by: having direct contact with an infected person (ex. touching), eating food or drinking liquids that have been contaminated with the virus, touching objects that have norovirus on them and then putting your fingers in your mouth, and sharing utensils or cups with people who are infected. To prevent norovirus from spreading you should: practice proper hand hygiene, prepare and handle food properly, when you are sick do not provide care or prepare food for others for at least 2-3 days after recovery, clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces, and wash laundry thoroughly.

There is no specific medicine or vaccine to treat people with norovirus illness. Norovirus infection cannot be treated with antibiotics because it is a viral (not a bacterial) infection. If you have norovirus illness, you should drink plenty of liquids to replace fluid lost from throwing up and diarrhea. This will help prevent dehydration.

For more information regarding norovirus visit CDC’s Norovirus website at www.cdc.gov/norovirus.

Brought to you by:



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