

If someone in your household has Norovirus:

- The infected person should not prepare food.
- Soiled bedding and clothes should be washed on the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Clean surfaces (toilet seats, flush handles, door handles and taps) at least daily with bleach/disinfectant diluted as per manufacturer's instructions.
- If cleaning up diarrhoea or vomit, wear rubber gloves; wash the surface with hot soapy water, rinse, and allow to dry. Use paper towels or disposable cloths, and dispose of carefully and immediately in a plastic bag (e.g. used carrier).
- The infected person should not share towels/flannels with anyone.
- All persons with diarrhoea should remain off work or school until they have had no symptoms for 48 hours.

Further information and help

Further advice and information is available from:

- NHS 24: Freephone 111 or www.nhs24.scot
- NHS Inform: www.nhsinform.scot

Notes

Use the space below to write down any questions you might have or to make notes.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at:
www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at:
www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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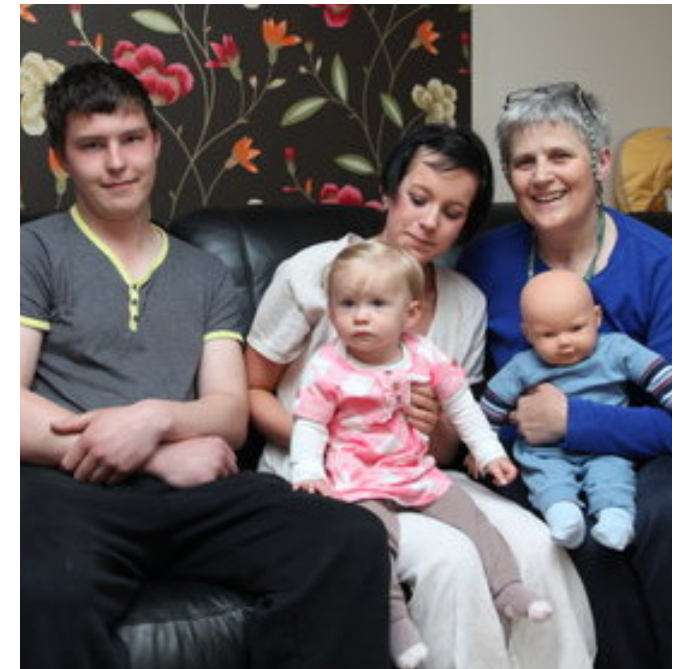
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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Information about Norovirus



Patient information leaflet

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a virus (a type of germ much smaller than bacteria) that causes gastro-intestinal illness.

In the past it has been known by many names: Norwalk-like virus, SRSV (small round structured virus), gastric flu, and winter vomiting disease.

How are infections treated?

There is no specific treatment. Symptoms usually last 12 to 60 hours. Although it is unpleasant, most people make a full and speedy recovery.

It is important to drink plenty to make sure that you don't become dehydrated. Clear fluids like water are recommended.

How does it spread?

The virus only infects humans. Illness is able to spread when virus particles from an infected person get into the gut of another person. This can happen in several ways:

- poor hygiene after going to the toilet
- virus particles spread in the air from vomit when someone has been sick
- virus particles can fall onto any object in the environment and be picked up by another person
- via contaminated food or water
- shellfish (e.g. oysters) from sewage contaminated water

What illness results from infection?

The incubation period, which is the time from first swallowing the virus to becoming ill, is 12-48 hours. The main symptoms are nausea, vomiting and watery diarrhoea but some people also suffer from:

- abdominal cramps
- headache
- muscle aches
- chills and fever

How can infection be prevented?

Good standards of personal and food hygiene will help to prevent spread. Unfortunately Norovirus spreads very quickly, especially where groups of people are together such as in schools or care homes. Always:

- wash hands after using the toilet or changing nappies
- cook raw shellfish before eating
- wash fruit and salads before eating

Should I see my GP?

You should consult your GP if one or more of the following applies to you if:

- there is blood in your diarrhoea
- you have severe abdominal pain
- the diarrhoea has lasted for 48 hours

How should hands be washed?

- Always use warm, running water and a mild, preferably liquid, soap. (It is not necessary to use soaps labelled as antiseptic or antibacterial).
- Wet hands and apply a small amount of soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 20 seconds.
- Pay special attention to areas between fingers, finger tips, and palms.
- Rinse hands under warm running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly on a clean dry towel.
- Avoid alcohol gels and rubs as they are not effective against the virus.

