

Summary for Norovirus/diarrhoea and vomiting outbreaks

There are many different types of viruses. Norovirus is a highly contagious and causes gastroenteritis leading to diarrhoea, vomiting, and stomach pain.

Norovirus spreads very easily and quickly

- It only takes a very small amount of norovirus particles to make you sick.
- People with norovirus illness shed billions of virus particles in their poo and vomit and can easily infect others.
- You are contagious from the moment you begin feeling sick and for the first few days after you recover.
- Norovirus can spread quickly in enclosed places like day care centres, nursing homes, and schools.
- Norovirus can stay alive on objects and surfaces and still infect people for days or weeks after the initial cases.
- Norovirus is extremely resilient to several disinfectants, drying out or heat, which makes it hard to destroy. It is much harder to eliminate than COVID-19.

Norovirus can spread to others by:

- having direct contact with an infected person.
- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus,
- touching objects that have norovirus on them and then putting your fingers in your mouth.

There's no vaccine to prevent norovirus infection and no drug to treat it. Antibiotics will not help with norovirus illness because antibiotics do not work on viruses.

When you have norovirus illness, drink plenty of liquids to replace fluid loss and prevent dehydration.

Those with symptoms should be excluded from the setting until 48 hours after their last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

Recommendations for action

Hand Hygiene:

- Children should be supervised and encouraged to wash their hands on arrival, before eating and drinking, after going to the toilet and before leaving.
- Hands should be washed with liquid soap and warm water.
- Paper towels should be used for drying hands and disposed of in a bin.
- Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus.
- Stop using sand, play dough and water play activities during an outbreak.

Cleaning and disinfection:

- Ensure surfaces are thoroughly cleaned daily using warm water and detergent.
- Higher risk areas should be cleaned twice daily and then disinfected using a hypochlorite solution 1,000 parts per million (such as Milton Solution)
 - All areas of the toilet including rims, seats and handles
 - Wash basins and taps
 - Door handles and light switches
 - All frequently touched equipment
 - Frequently handled items such as telephones and computer keyboards
- It is recommended that toilets are cleaned at least twice a day and checked regularly as accidents may be unreported and additional cleaning required.
- Always wear disposable apron and gloves when cleaning.

Carpeted areas and soft furnishings should be cleaned as normal, preferably with a carpet shampoo rather than a vacuum cleaner (hypochlorite will bleach fabrics and furnishings)

Public spillage incident:

When spillages occur:

- Cover the faeces/vomit immediately with disposable paper towels.
- Always wear a disposable apron and gloves when disposing of faeces/vomit. A face mask should be worn if there is a concern about splash contamination to the face.
- After removing the spillage, clean the surrounding area with warm soapy water, followed by disinfection with a hypochlorite solution of 1000 parts per million. Always clean a wider area than is visibly contaminated. The [YouTube video of 'Vomiting Larry'](#) is helpful in demonstrating potential spread of vomit.
- Carpets contaminated with faeces or vomit should be cleaned with warm soapy water (or a carpet shampoo) after removal of the spillage with paper towels. This should be followed by steam cleaning if possible.

The area where the incident has occurred should be cleared and ventilated as soon as possible.

Parents/carers of children who become ill at school should be contacted and asked to pick up their children from school. Affected children should be separated from their classmates if possible until their parents/carers arrive.

Food Safety:

- Everyone should eat and drink in designated areas (i.e. dining hall or staff room).
- Open boxes of chocolates/biscuits and fruit bowls must be removed in an outbreak as they can easily become contaminated.
- Food handlers should avoid contact with children during an outbreak, to avoid contamination of the kitchen or food.
- Kitchens MUST have their own separate cleaning equipment

Other actions during an outbreak:

- Staff movements between classrooms and joint class activities in school e.g. assembly, should be restricted.
- Group visits in and out of school should be paused until the last individual has recovered from their symptoms (48 hours after last episode).
- Visitors to the school should be postponed or if their visit is necessary then they should be informed of the outbreak and any control measures in place.

Report outbreaks to:

- UKHSA- East Midlands team- 0344 225 4524

For further advice please contact:

- Health Safety and Wellbeing Team – HealthandSafety.Enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk