

## Effective Hand Washing



1. Palm to palm



2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



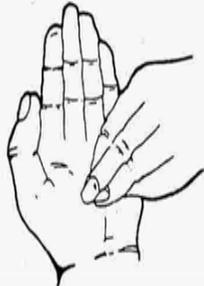
3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use the box provided below to

This information leaflet is adapted from the information leaflet produced by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre.

July 2010

St. John's Hospital,  
St. John's Square,  
Limerick.

Telephone: 061 462222  
Website: [www.stjohnshospital.ie](http://www.stjohnshospital.ie)

Developed by

**Breda O'Brien**

Clinical Nurse Specialist Infection Prevention and Control

**Patricia Keeshan**

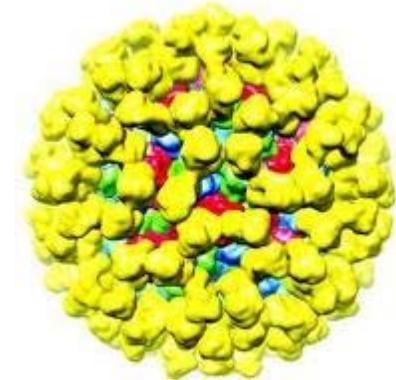
Management Services/Accreditation Licensing Co-ordinator

December 2010



St. John's Hospital  
Limerick

## Norovirus



## Information Leaflet

**For  
Patients,  
Relatives  
and Visitors**

# What is Norovirus ?

Norovirus has also been called 'winter vomiting disease', 'small round-structured virus' or 'Norwalk-like-virus'

## What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is one of the most common causes of gastroenteritis (stomach bug).

## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of Norovirus infection will begin around 12 to 48 hours after becoming infected. The illness is self-limiting and the symptoms will last for 12-60 hours. They will start with:-

- Nausea (often sudden onset)
- Vomiting (often projectile)
- Watery diarrhoea
- Some people have a rise in temperature, chills, muscle aches and headaches

Most people make a full recovery within 1-2 days, however some people (usually the very young or elderly) may become very dehydrated and require hospital treatment.

## How does Norovirus spread?

The virus is easily transmitted from one person to another. It can be transmitted by contact with an infected person; by consuming contaminated food or water or by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.

## Why does Norovirus often cause outbreaks?

Norovirus's often causes outbreaks because they are easily spread from one person to another. The faeces and vomit of an infected person contain the virus and are infectious. People infected with the virus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to 2-3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as 2 weeks after recovery. The virus is able to survive in the environment for many days.

Outbreaks usually tend to affect people in semi-closed environments such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes. Staff, patients and visitors can all be affected by Norovirus and this can be very disruptive for the running of the hospital, as well as very uncomfortable for whoever is suffering from it.

In hospitals the most effective way to respond to an outbreak is to:-

- Isolate those who have been infected from non-infected patients for up to 48 hours after their symptoms have ceased.
- Close wards to new admissions.
- Disinfect contaminated areas.
- Implement good hygiene measures including strict hand hygiene measures.

## Is Norovirus a risk to visitors?

Norovirus could be a risk to visitors therefore visiting will normally be

restricted. We ask visitors not to visit during outbreak situations. The Nurse Manager on the ward will advise on visitor restrictions.

Visitors/relatives that are unwell or suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not visit until their symptoms have resolved for at least 2 full days.

## How is Norovirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for Norovirus, apart from letting the condition run its course. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

## What can be done to prevent infection?

Although it is not always possible to prevent getting Norovirus, good hygiene measures around someone who is infected can decrease your chances of getting infected. Frequent hand washing including before eating and preparing food.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner. Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness.

Flush or discard any vomit and/or faeces in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

## Are there any long-term effects?

No, there are no long-term effects from Norovirus.