

Norovirus

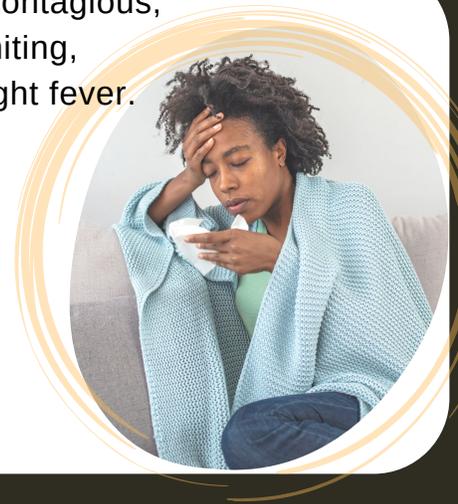
STOMACH FLU



Noroviruses, the most common causes of viral gastroenteritis, are very contagious, with symptoms including watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue. Most cases have no fever or a slight fever.

Illness is self-limiting, and symptoms generally **last 24 - 48 hours**. Although often termed “stomach flu,” norovirus infection should not be confused with influenza, which is a respiratory illness.

Incubation Period: Symptoms usually begin 24 - 48 hours (range of 10- 50 hours) after exposure.



Mode of Transmission: Norovirus is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, aerosolization of vomit, direct ingestion, environmental contamination, and food contaminated by infected food handlers.

Period of Communicability: A person is most likely to spread norovirus when experiencing symptoms and during 72 hours after recovery. Some studies indicate that those infected can shed virus up to two weeks after recovery or that it is possible to shed the virus within the day before symptom onset. Only a very small dose of virus is needed to cause infection.

Prevention/Care: Encourage frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting, after swimming, and before and after food preparation. Regular, scheduled cleaning of surfaces in restrooms with bleach or another EPA-approved, spore-killing disinfectant is advised.

Exclusion: Persons with viral acute gastroenteritis should stay home until they no longer experience vomiting or diarrhea and have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours. Food handlers and healthcare workers should not return to work for a minimum of 48 hours after their symptoms resolve. Persons with diarrhea or vomiting should not swim or use a shared whirlpool.

Outbreaks / Reporting: Norovirus outbreak in the school setting is defined as four or more cases occurring with initial dates of onset within 48 hours of each other, and have resulted from a common exposure, such as ingestion of a common food. Report suspected Norovirus outbreaks to Tazewell County Health Department as soon as possible during normal business hours, but within 24 hours to (309)-929-0276.