

**What is norovirus?**

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause diarrhea or vomiting in people. Anyone can become infected with these viruses. Since norovirus infection is not a reportable disease in Oklahoma, the number of cases that occur each year is unknown.

**What are the symptoms of norovirus infection?**

Symptoms of norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people can also experience a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and may feel tired. The illness is brief, with symptoms lasting only about one or two days.

**How soon do symptoms appear?**

The symptoms usually begin about 24 to 48 hours after exposure to the virus, but can appear as early as 12 hours after exposure.

**What is the treatment for norovirus infection?**

No specific treatment for norovirus infection is available. Oral re-hydration or intravenous fluids may be needed for severe cases. Antibiotics only work against bacterial infections and should not be used for norovirus.

**How are norovirus infections spread?**

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. The virus is spread through ingestion of water or food contaminated with feces from an infected person. Objects such as toys and other surfaces contaminated with feces from an infected person have also been known to transmit the virus.

**How long is an infected person able to spread norovirus?**

People with norovirus infection can spread the virus from when they become ill to at least three days after symptoms stop. Some people may be contagious for as long as two weeks after symptoms have stopped.

**How can norovirus infection be prevented?**

Good hand hygiene techniques and proper disposal of contaminated wastes (including diapers) can prevent spread of the virus. Surfaces contaminated with norovirus should be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a bleach solution containing a minimum concentration of 1000ppm (1 part household bleach to 50 parts water). This solution must be mixed daily to be effective. Disinfectants other than bleach are not effective against norovirus. Children with diarrhea should not attend day care until the diarrhea has stopped.

**Does a past infection make a person immune?**

No. Because there are many different strains of norovirus, it makes it difficult for the person's body to develop long-lasting immunity. Therefore, norovirus can recur throughout a person's lifetime.

