



NOROVIRUS – PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes gastrointestinal illness. As few as 10 viral particles may be sufficient to infect an individual. Outbreaks caused by Norovirus often results from person-to person spread or from consumption of contaminated food, ice or drinks. Contaminated environmental surfaces (e.g. door handles, washing machines, napkins, stair rails) may also act as a source of exposure. There is good evidence suggesting that the virus can be transmitted from air-borne droplets from vomit that presumably results in contaminating surrounding environmental surfaces.

Protect Yourself

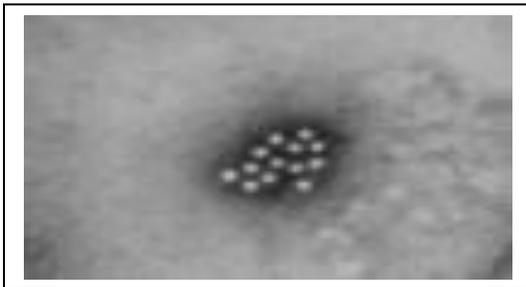
- Wash your hands before preparing and eating food and after using the bathroom.
- Do not expose others while you are ill. Stay home until symptoms have subsided for 24 hours.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of diarrhea or vomiting.
- Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.
- Immediate remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with feces or vomitus (use hot water and soap).
- Clean and sanitize areas frequently touched by others.
- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water.
- When sharing food such as nuts or unwrapped candy, use utensils to take the food rather than bare hands.
- Keep areas where you prepare food clean and sanitized.

Sanitizing and Disinfecting

- Norovirus is one of the hardiest viruses known. Environmental surfaces that hands and food routinely comes in contact with needs to be cleaned and sanitized frequently. During an outbreak, these same surfaces need a higher level of cleaning and disinfection. Disinfection kills 99.9% of all germs; sanitizing knocks the germ load down to acceptable levels.
- When using chlorine bleach as a disinfectant on hard surfaces such as countertops and door handles, and bathroom fixtures etc., a 1:10 dilution is the recommended strength to kill the virus. (1 and 2/3 cup unscented bleach to 1 gal. of water)



- **Norovirus and Hepatitis A** are the two most common viruses that cause foodborne illness.
- These viruses are found in the feces of people infected with the virus and are transferred to food when infected food handlers touch food or equipment with bare hands that have not been properly washed.
- Foods often associated with Norovirus and Hepatitis A: Raw or undercooked shellfish from contaminated waters, raw produce, contaminated drinking water, uncooked foods (sandwiches, salad items), and cooked foods that are not heated after contact with an infected food handler before the food is consumed.

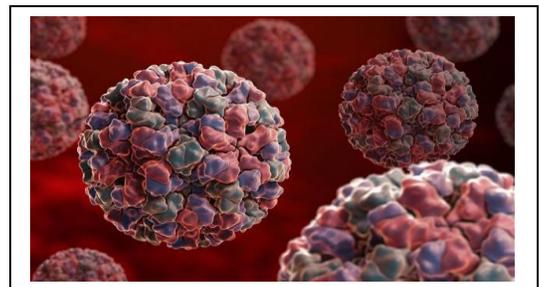


Hepatitis A

Characteristics of Illness: Sudden onset of fever, malaise, nausea, and abdominal pain, followed by jaundice (yellowing of skin and whites of eyes).

Onset: Symptoms of illness may not occur until about 28 days (ranges from 15 to 50 days) after consuming contaminated food.

Duration: Illness may last from 2 weeks to 3 months.



Norovirus*

Characteristics of Illness: Sometimes mistaken for the stomach flu, symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Symptoms may be accompanied by headache and low-grade fever.

Onset: Symptoms may appear 10 to 50 hours after consuming contaminated food.

Duration: Illness may last 24 to 48 hours.

*See Additional Norovirus Information on reverse.

Preventing the Spread

- Always wash hands well before preparing foods. Minimize or eliminate direct-hand contact with ready to eat foods.
- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water.
- Purchase all food items from an approved source.
- Do not let ill employees handle or prepare food. Food handlers must report any illness to their manager before starting work.
- Keep food preparation areas clean and sanitized. *

***Sanitizing and Disinfecting:** Is the product you use to sanitize and disinfect contaminated equipment and utensils effective against these viruses? Check the product label or contact your supplier to find out.