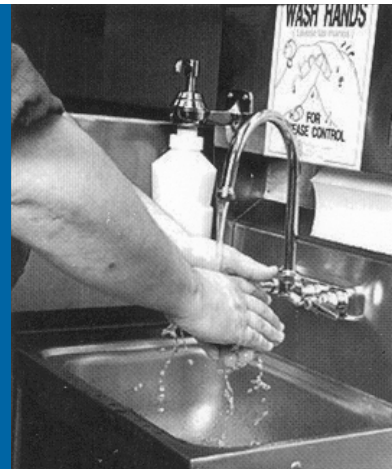


## Norovirus: Know the Facts

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.



### Protecting Yourself and Others....

- Always wash your hands well 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.
- Immediately 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.

### Characteristics of Illness:

- 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 exposure.

### Duration:

- Illness may last 1 to 3 days.

### Note:

Fluids are recommended to prevent dehydration because the diarrhea that flushes out of the body drains a great deal of liquid.

### Foods Often Associated With Norovirus



- Sandwiches, shellfish, salad items, vegetables, water and other ready-to-eat foods are most often associated with "viral" foodborne outbreaks.
- Contamination occurs when food is handled by infected foodhandlers.

### 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. Is the product you use to sanitize and disinfect contaminated equipment and utensils effective against Norovirus? Check the products label or contact your supplier to find out. Better to be safe than sorry!