

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET

NOROVIRUS

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the “stomach flu”, or gastroenteritis in people. This “stomach flu” is not related to the flu (or influenza), which is a respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. Noroviruses are very contagious and can spread easily from person to person.

Symptoms

- Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Other symptoms can include a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness.
- Symptoms usually begin about 24 to 48 hours after exposure to the virus, but they can appear as early as 12 hours after exposure.
- The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick.
- The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting only about 1 or 2 days.
- In general, children experience more vomiting than adults.

Transmission

- Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people.
- People can become infected by eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with Norovirus, touching surfaces or objects contaminated with Norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth, having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

Treatment

- There is no specific treatment for Norovirus. Noroviruses cannot be treated with antibiotics.
- By drinking fluids such as juice and water, people can reduce their chances of becoming dehydrated.

Prevention

- Person-to-person transmission can be minimized by frequent good hand hygiene. Washing hands with soap and water is more effective than hand sanitizer for protecting against Norovirus.
- Persons who are infected with Norovirus should not prepare food while they have symptoms and for 3 days after they recover from their illness.
- Household transmission can be minimized by frequent handwashing, promptly disinfecting contaminated surfaces with chlorine bleach, washing soiled clothing and linens in hot water and by minimizing bare hand contact of food that is not going to be cooked.

Additional Information

People infected with Norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least 3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as 3 weeks after recovery.

Since the virus is passed in vomit and in stool, children who are infected should not go to daycare or school while they have diarrhea or vomiting. Infected people who work in nursing homes, take care of patients, or handle food should stay out of work until at least 3 days after their symptoms end.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdrsinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

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