

Norovirus

Norovirus can spread very easily from one person to another and only a very small amount of the virus is needed to cause infection. It may be caught:-

- Being exposed to virus in the vomit or diarrhoea of an infected person e.g. when cleaning up.
- Not washing hands after using the toilet.
- Touching surfaces (such as toilet seats, rails, furniture) that have virus on them
- From food that has been contaminated e.g. oysters are commonly contaminated from sewage polluted sea.
- By breathing in virus that remains in the air for some time after projectile vomiting.

As you can see its very contagious and very difficult to control once a building is infected

How is norovirus prevented?

Because the virus spreads so easily and can be spread via people who are asymptomatic (shows no sign of the virus), it is almost impossible to prevent all norovirus infection. Instead, we concentrate on measures that will reduce the chance of the virus spreading.

1. **Good hand washing with soap** and water is the key to preventing norovirus from spreading. Alcohol hand gel does not kill norovirus.
 - Staff should clean their hands regularly including before every shift
 - Guests should be prompted through signs in the toilets and in their rooms to wash their hands with soap and water
 - Staff and guests should wash their hands before handling food and after visiting the toilet.
2. **Isolating those with the virus.** People with norovirus should be isolated from non-infected persons. Staff should stay away from the building Guests should be asked to stay in their rooms if possible.
3. **Cleaning.** Enhanced cleaning using bleach-containing products is needed to eradicate norovirus from the environment. Vomit and diarrhoea must be cleaned up immediately. Staff training must be carried out first and suitable PPE available

4. Symptomatic people must stay away from the building.

Staff and visitors who develop symptoms must not come into the building and stay away until they have been free of symptoms for 48-72 hours. Staff must be well before returning to work

Remember

Alcohol gels do not kill Norovirus so ensure that hand washing and cleaning is thorough and scrupulous

Any area that has had the infection must be closed down until disinfected

Visitors must be informed there is an outbreak within the building

Anyone infected must stay away from the building until 72 hours after symptoms have ceased or they have the all clear