



Norovirus

Norovirus is a common cause of viral gastroenteritis ("stomach flu") outbreaks. Norovirus is not related to flu or influenza. Although people who have norovirus infection may feel very sick for several days, the illness is seldom serious. Norovirus outbreaks are common during the winter months, when people are indoors and in close contact.

Symptoms include: nausea and vomiting, watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches. Norovirus is found in the stool and vomit of infected people. It is very contagious and usually spread person-to-person, or by contaminated food. People can become infected with the virus by eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus, touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then putting their hands in their mouth, or direct contact with a person who is infected and showing symptoms.

There is no known treatment for norovirus. If you are infected with norovirus, fluid loss from vomiting and diarrhea can lead to dehydration. Oral rehydration fluids can be purchase over-the-counter are most helpful for mild dehydration. Severe dehydration may require hospitalization.

You can decrease your chance of becoming ill with norovirus, or of spreading norovirus to others by following these recommendations:

- Wash your hands, especially after using the toilet, changing diapers, before eating, and before preparing food.
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables, and cook seafood thoroughly before eating.
- When you are ill, avoid preparing food for others for at least three days after the last symptoms have occurred.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with bleach based disinfectants.

