

WHAT IS NOROVIRUS? (WINTER VOMITING VIRUS)

It is an extremely infectious stomach bug belonging to a group of viruses called Norovirus. This produces a gastro-enteritis type illness. It is dubbed the 'winter vomiting virus' because it is more likely to cause illness during the winter months. These infections are however common all the year round.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF NOROVIRUS?

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people additionally have a low grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness is short lived and normally resolved over 24-48 hours.

IS IT CONTAGIOUS?

It is extremely contagious. Norovirus is found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with Norovirus, or 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

the illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone that is ill).

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 2 weeks after recovery.

WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO IF THEY CONTRACT NOROVIRUS?

For Patients – At Benenden we advise patients who have had Norovirus or who may be suffering from it, not to come to the hospital. Please ring and speak to one of the Infection Control Team or inform the ward where you will be having your procedure performed. We would ask you to wait for 48 hours after the symptoms of the diarrhoea and vomiting have completely gone before having a procedure (or coming into the hospital)

For Visitors – Please do not visit Benenden Hospital if you are suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting. Make sure the symptoms have completely gone for at least 48 hours before visiting the hospital.

For Staff – Please inform your manager and Infection Control Team as soon as possible. You should not return to work until 48 hours after the symptoms have completely gone. If concerned please contact the Infection Control Team or the Occupational Health Department.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR NOROVIRUS?

Unfortunately there is no specific treatment for Norovirus apart from letting the illness run its course; therefore it is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

WHAT IS BENENDEN HOSPITAL DOING TO REDUCE THE RISK OF NOROVIRUS?

It is particularly important for patients, visitors and staff to use **CORRECT HAND HYGIENE**.

- The hand gel is provided on the entrance of the hospital and all the wards and departments. However soap and water is the preferred method to wash your hands to reduce the spread of Norovirus.
- We ask staff, patients and visitors after using the toilet to wash their hands thoroughly.
- We ask visitors not to touch the patients' dressings or intravenous lines or catheters
- We ask visitors not to sit on the patients beds.
- We ask visitors not to give patients cooked food without asking a member of the nursing staff.

The Infection Control Team are:-

Heather Leslie, Lead Infection Prevention
& Control Practitioner

**There are Infection Control Link Nurses
in every clinical area.**

They can be contacted on 01580 240333
Ex 7286 , or Ex 7043

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INFECTION CONTROL

DID YOU KNOW?

**Norovirus
(Winter Vomiting Virus)**

**Information for Patients,
Visitors and Staff**

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