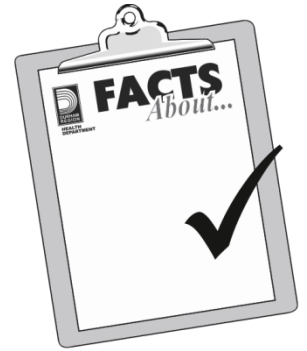




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Noroviruses

What is it?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that causes gastrointestinal illness sometimes called the “stomach flu”. Noroviruses are a common cause of outbreaks in long-term care homes, hospitals, child care centres, schools, cruise ships and at banquets. This illness occurs most often in the fall and winter.

How is it spread?

Noroviruses are found in the stool and vomit of people with the illness. It can spread as soon as you start feeling sick, until at least 3 days after you feel better. Sometimes it can continue to spread for up to 2 weeks after you start feeling better and you can even get sick again.

There are many ways in which you can get sick, such as, touching someone who has it; eating foods or drinking drinks that have the virus in it; or touching something with the virus on it and then putting your hands into your mouth. These viruses can spread very easily and very fast.

What do I look for?

You may suddenly start to feel sick 1 to 2 days after the virus gets into you. Nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea and stomach cramps are common symptoms. You may also have a low grade fever, chills, headache and muscle aches. Although you may feel very sick and vomit many times a day, you will usually feel better in 1 to 3 days and without any serious health effect. Young people, older people and people with weak immune systems can become dehydrated more easily and may need special attention.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for norovirus. Vaccines and antibiotics cannot prevent or treat it. If you are vomiting and have diarrhea, you should drink a lot of fluids. Fluids with water, sugar and salts (such as sport drinks) can help prevent dehydration.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How can I protect myself?

- Wash your hands well with warm running water and soap, rubbing together for at least 15 seconds, after using the washroom, changing diapers, before eating and preparing foods
- Wash your hands often when you take care of someone who is sick, especially with diarrhea and vomiting
- Wash your fruits and vegetables, and cook your shellfish well before eating them
- Dispose vomit and/or stool right away after being sick and then wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that have come into contact with vomit and/or diarrhea right away, such as toilets, sinks and surrounding areas. Your disinfectants should be bleach/chlorine-based
- Wash your clothing and linens that have come into contact with vomit and/or diarrhea right away using hot water, detergent and dry on a high-heat setting
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often, such as, railings, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures

Additional precautions:

- Wash your hands before and after visiting a hospital, long-term care home or child care centre
- If you are sick, stay home for at least 48 hours after you feel better
- If you are sick, do not prepare or serve any food
- If you are sick, stay away from healthy people and avoid any group activities
- If possible, use only one washroom while you are sick and for at least 48 hours after you feel better

More information can be obtained from

Durham Region Health Department, Environmental Help Line
905-723-3818 or 1-888-777-9613

September 20, 2017

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