

# Advice to parents and guardians

## Norovirus

Diarrhoea and vomiting



16<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian,

There have been several cases of **Norovirus like infection** within the **nursery** and your child may have been exposed.

### What is Norovirus?

Norovirus causes diarrhoea and vomiting and is one of the most common stomach bugs in the UK. It's also called the 'winter vomiting bug' because it's more common in winter, although you can catch it at any time of the year.

Your GP may suggest sending off a sample of your stool to a laboratory to confirm whether you have norovirus or another infection.

### Is it dangerous?

No, Norovirus symptoms can be very unpleasant, but they usually clear up in a few days, however medical advice should, be sought if:

- your baby or child has passed 6 or more watery stools (poo) in the past 24 hours or has vomited 3 times or more in the past 24 hours
- your baby or child is less responsive, feverish, or has pale or mottled skin
- you or your child has symptoms of severe dehydration, such as persistent dizziness, only passing small amounts of urine or no urine at all, or reduced consciousness – babies and elderly people have a greater risk of becoming dehydrated
- you have bloody diarrhoea
- you or your child have a serious underlying medical condition, such as kidney disease, and have diarrhoea and vomiting

### How is it spread?

Norovirus spreads very easily in public places such as hospitals, nursing homes and schools.

You can catch it if small particles of vomit or stools (poo) from an infected person get into your mouth through: close contact with someone with norovirus who may breathe out small particles of the virus that you then inhale touching contaminated surfaces or objects, as the virus can survive outside the body for several days eating contaminated food, which can happen if an infected person doesn't wash their hands before preparing or handling food

Norovirus is most infectious from the start of symptoms until 48 hours after all symptoms have stopped. You may also be infectious for a short time before and after this.

You can get norovirus more than once because the virus is always changing and your body is unable to build up long-term resistance to it.

### Is there any treatment?

There's no treatment for norovirus, so you have to let it run its course. You don't usually need to get medical advice unless there's a risk of a more serious problem.

To help ease your own or your child's symptoms drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You need to drink more than usual to replace the fluids lost from vomiting and diarrhoea – as well as water, adults could also try fruit juice and soup.

**What is the incubation period (period before infection develops)?**

The incubation period of norovirus is 12-48 hours, which is the time between catching the virus and developing symptoms. Individuals are most infectious when symptomatic, but it is possible to pass on norovirus or shed the virus, thereby contaminating surfaces, objects or even food, both before developing symptoms and after symptoms have stopped.

**How long should children stay away from school?**

Children should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea / vomiting.

**Can you catch it more than once?**

Yes.

Thank you for giving this your attention. You can find further information on Norovirus from either from your GP or NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/>



Regards

Katherine Muncaster  
Headteacher