

# NOROVIRUS

## PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

### *What is Norovirus?*

*Noroviruses are a group of viruses which can produce an inflammation of the intestinal tract, with symptoms of nausea, diarrhea and vomiting. It is a common water and foodborne illness that can occur in all age groups. It is usually a self-limited, mild to moderate illness lasting 24-60 hours with an average incubation period of 12-48 hours.*

### **How is it spread?**

Norovirus is very contagious and can be spread easily by:

- eating or drinking food or water contaminated by persons infected with norovirus.
- having direct contact with a person infected with norovirus.
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then touching their mouth before handwashing.
- contamination of food and water can occur when raw sewage pollutes the water.
- eating food from contaminated waters such as oysters and clams.
- foods commonly contaminated that have been implicated in widespread outbreaks are: salad dressings, cake frosting, salads, raspberries, raw shellfish, sandwiches.
- The virus is spread during the acute stage of the illness and up to three days after diarrhea stops.

### **How is it treated?**

- Norovirus can be diagnosed by checking a stool sample. Lab testing is difficult and is done only if there is an apparent outbreak
- The primary treatment is to replace fluids lost due to diarrhea.

### **How is it prevented?**

- Practice good personal hygiene and hand washing.
- Use safe food and water supplies.
- Cook foods thoroughly.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before serving.
- Clean contaminated surfaces using a bleach based household cleaner.

### **SYMPTOMS OF NOROVIRUS**

- nausea
- vomiting--acute onset
- abdominal pain/cramps
- diarrhea--watery, non-bloody
- low-grade fever
- chills
- headache
- muscle aches
- fatigue

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