

Patient information

Viral Gastroenteritis

Infection Prevention and Control Team

What is viral gastroenteritis?

It is an illness that is caused by several different viruses, with Norovirus being the most common in adults.

There are more cases during the winter and therefore it is sometimes called 'winter vomiting disease', but it can occur at any time of year and can cause outbreaks of diarrhoea and/or vomiting in hospital, care homes, schools, and cruise liners.

Symptoms may include:

- Nausea.
- Vomiting – which may be projectile.
- Diarrhoea – often watery.
- Stomach pains and cramps.

Onset is usually sudden, typically without warning. Symptoms usually last between 24–48 hours.

How is viral gastroenteritis spread?

Anyone can get it, but the very young and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

You can get it:

- From other people who are ill with viral gastroenteritis – from contact with their stool or vomit.
- Through the air when they are vomiting.
- On the hands of staff, patients or visitors through direct physical contact.
- Through contaminated equipment.
- From food contaminated by someone who has viral gastroenteritis.

If I get it, what will happen to me?

Most patients with viral gastroenteritis are better cared for at home with sufficient rest and through drinking plenty of clear fluids, such as water.

If you are admitted to hospital:

You may be asked to move to a single room or to a bay with other patients who have the same virus, or to another ward for your own comfort and privacy, and to help reduce the risk of infection spreading to others

You will be given a toilet or commode specifically for you to use, or if you are being cared for in a bay, the bay will have a toilet.

Staff will wear apron, gloves and face mask to look after you. This is to prevent spreading the infection to others.

You must make sure that you wash your hands well after using the toilet and before meals. It is better to use soap and water as alcohol hand rub is less effective against Norovirus.

Will I need treatment?

Antibiotics are not needed to treat Norovirus. The main treatment is making sure you drink plenty of fluid unless otherwise directed by your doctor.

If you develop diarrhoea and vomiting, you will be asked to provide a stool sample which will be sent to the laboratory for testing. Once the illness is over, no further action is necessary, and your treatment will continue as before.

Food and drink

Diarrhoea and vomiting can result in dehydration. It is important to drink plenty of fluid to prevent this.

Any food kept on the ward, for example, fruit, should be put into a locker and washed and peeled before eating.

Visitors are advised not to eat or drink during visiting at this time.

Can I have visitors?

Yes, you can have visitors, but we advise that you keep the number to a minimum.

Although the symptoms are mild, children should be discouraged from coming to visit you, as they may be particularly at risk of getting the virus.

Your visitors will need to clean their hands before entering and every time they leave your room.

They are not required to wear aprons and gloves when entering your room unless they are helping with your care.

Laundry

Clothes can become easily soiled during this time, so we advise that ward nightwear is used by patients until the symptoms stop.

If your own clothing does become soiled, it will be placed in a plastic bag in the locker to be taken by relatives and laundered.

Wash these clothes separately on the hottest wash suitable for the garment. Remember to wash your hands after handling soiled linen.

Can I be discharged home with Norovirus?

Patients can be discharged to their **own home**, even if they have Norovirus, if they are fit for discharge and will be able to manage their symptoms at home.

Patients with Norovirus who are awaiting discharge/transfer to a nursing/residential home or other hospital, or patients who do not have Norovirus but are on a closed ward, must be symptom free for 72 hours or until the ward has been re-opened. This is to stop the spread of Norovirus to other patients/staff in other healthcare facilities.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is appreciated.

Further information

Infection Prevention and Control Team

Aintree Hospital

Tel: 0151 529 4930

Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 4930

Royal or Broadgreen Hospitals

Tel: 0151 706 4416.

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 4416

Norovirus (vomiting bug) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Author: Infection Prevention and Control

Review date: June 2025

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل انتمان المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعية الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والإلكترونية.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 (Moon) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل میتوانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانیاری پیوهندیدار بهو نهخوشانهی له لایمن تراستهوه پهسهند کراون، نهگهر داوا بکرنیت له فورماتهکانی تردا بریتی له زمانهکانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنهوه)، چاپی گهوره، شریتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و نهلیکترونیکی هیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字
体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.