



**Countess of
Chester Hospital**
NHS Foundation Trust

Norovirus

Information for patients, staff and relatives



What is Norovirus?

Norovirus belongs to a group of viruses that are the most common cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the UK.

The Norovirus infection is also referred to as “winter vomiting disease” because people often develop this during the winter months. However, it can occur at any time of the year. This virus has a significant impact on the NHS every year as wards may need to be closed to prevent spread.

Why is it a problem?

Norovirus is brought into the hospital by individuals who are symptomatic with vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or who are incubating the illness and develop symptoms unexpectedly while in the hospital. This can be patients, relatives, visitors or staff. Norovirus can spread very easily in the hospital due to the close contact between patients, visitors and staff and can survive for several days in a contaminated area if not regularly cleaned.

How is it spread?

It can be spread through contact with an infected person, through contact with surfaces or objects that are contaminated with the virus, or by consuming contaminated food or water.

How do you stop Norovirus spreading?

The main ways to prevent Norovirus from spreading are:

- Thorough hand washing using soap and water following any contact with a symptomatic individual and especially after using the toilet and before eating.
- Caring for patients with vomiting and diarrhoea in a single room with their own toilet or commode, or on a closed ward.
- Staff using gloves and aprons when providing close personal care for symptomatic patients.
- Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward environment, toilets, commodes and other equipment.
- Regular changing and washing of linen, clothing and towels.
- Avoiding visiting the hospital if you are unwell.

How will I know if I have Norovirus?

Norovirus symptoms usually start one to two days after becoming exposed, but it can be as little as 12 hours, with symptoms generally lasting for 2-3 days.

The first symptom is usually the sudden onset of nausea, which is followed by projectile vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Some people may also have a raised temperature (over 38°C), headaches, stomach cramps or aching limbs.

Norovirus can be detected within the laboratory from stool specimens; however, diagnosis can also be made based on symptoms.

What will happen to me if I get Norovirus?

You may be moved to a single room until you are free of symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours. If a number of people on the ward also develop this illness, the ward may be closed to admissions and visitors as a preventative measure. This is to help limit the spread of this infection to others.

Can Norovirus be treated?

Norovirus has no long-term effects and is generally 'self-limiting', which means it gets better without treatment. Antibiotics will not help you get better quicker.

It is important to make sure that you drink plenty of fluids when possible, unless otherwise directed by staff and also to rest. You will still receive all the treatment you need. However, some non-urgent investigations may be postponed until you have recovered.

Can I have visitors?

We ask that visitors who are unwell themselves must not visit until they are better. Visitors may need to wear gloves and aprons and they must wash their hands before and after visiting anyone in hospital. This protects patients and prevents the spread of infections to others. If your visitors are going to see another patient on the same day, they should come to see you afterwards.

Please adhere to local infection prevention and control guidance. The Trust reserves the right to refuse or end a visit if safety cannot be maintained.

What about my personal laundry?

If you are suffering from Norovirus special laundry bags are available from staff for your relatives/carers to place directly in the washing machine at home.

Can I develop Norovirus again?

Yes. Immunity is not long lasting and you could be affected in the future.

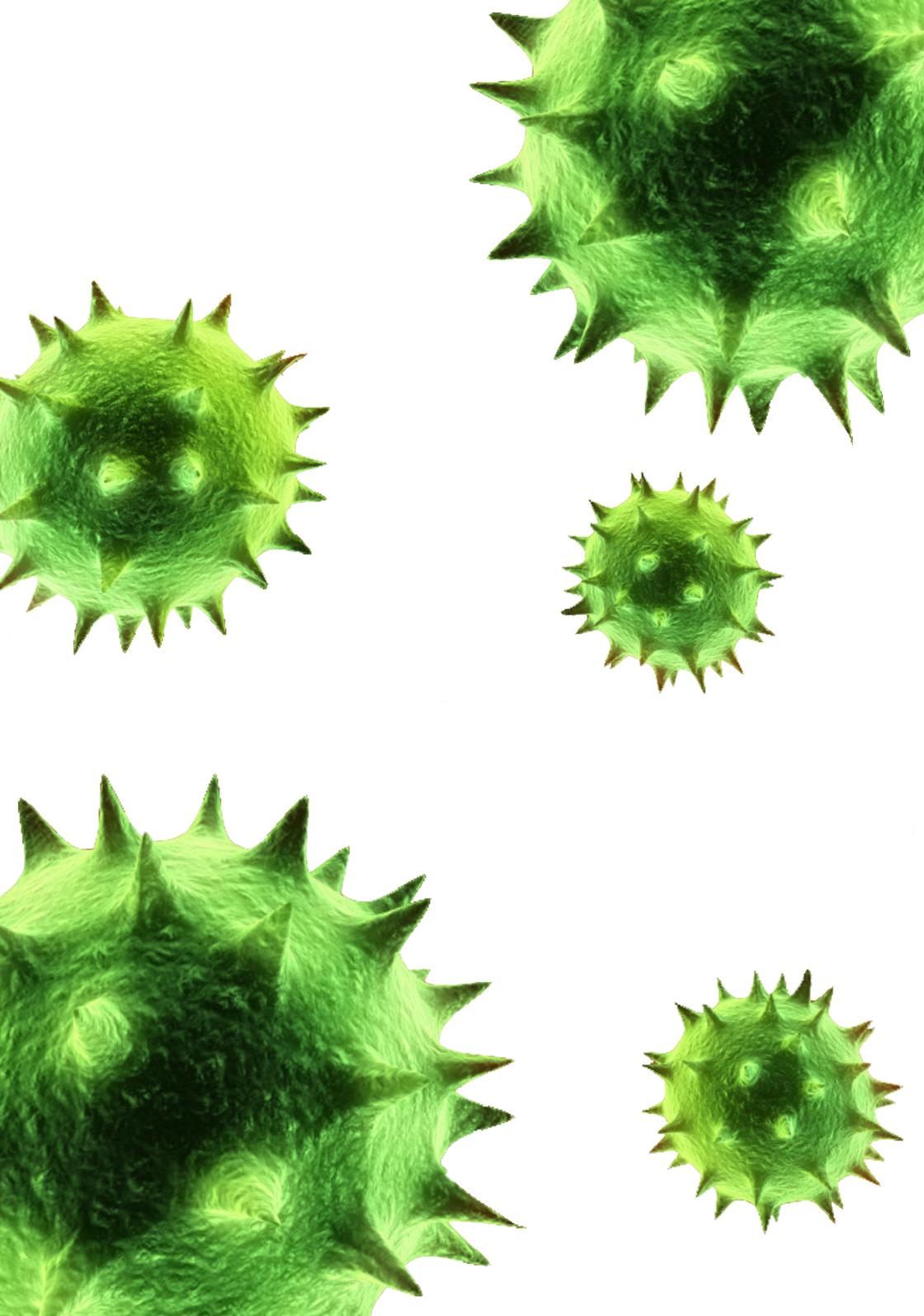
Can I go home if I have Norovirus?

As soon as the doctor thinks you are well enough to manage your symptoms at home, you can be discharged. If you are readmitted to hospital for any reason within 48 hours, please inform staff that you have recently had Norovirus.

Who can I speak to if I have further questions?

Please speak to any of the staff who are caring for you.

If the staff are unable to answer your questions or, if you require further information, please ask a member of staff to contact the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse Team on your behalf.



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on compact disk and in other languages on request. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

Telephone: 01244 366066
or email: coch.patientexperience@nhs.net

إذا ترغب في الحصول على النسخة باللغة العربية ، فضلاً اتصل بمركز معلومات المرضى أو تحدث مع أحد الموظفين

若是你想索取這份傳單的中文譯本，請聯絡「病人預約中心」或向其中一名職員查詢。

Si vous voulez cette brochure en français, contactez le bureau des rendez-vous ou demandez à un membre du personnel.

यदि आप यह परचा हिन्दी में लेना चाहते हैं तो कृपया पेशेंट अॅपाइन्टमेंट सेंटर से संपर्क करें या किसी स्टाफ से पूछें।

Haddii aad jeclaan laheyd buug-yarahan oo af-Soomaali ku qoran la soo xiriiri xarruunta bukaan ballaminta ama wax weydii xubin shaqaalaha ka tirsan.

Si desea recibir este folleto en español, sírvase contactar al Centro de Citas para Pacientes o solicitarlo al personal.

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