

Are there any long-term effects?

Thankfully, norovirus has no long-term effects.

What can I do to help stop the spread of norovirus?

Do not visit any health care setting – including GP surgeries, hospital wards, or care homes if you have any symptoms of norovirus. Wait 48 hours until the symptoms have ceased.

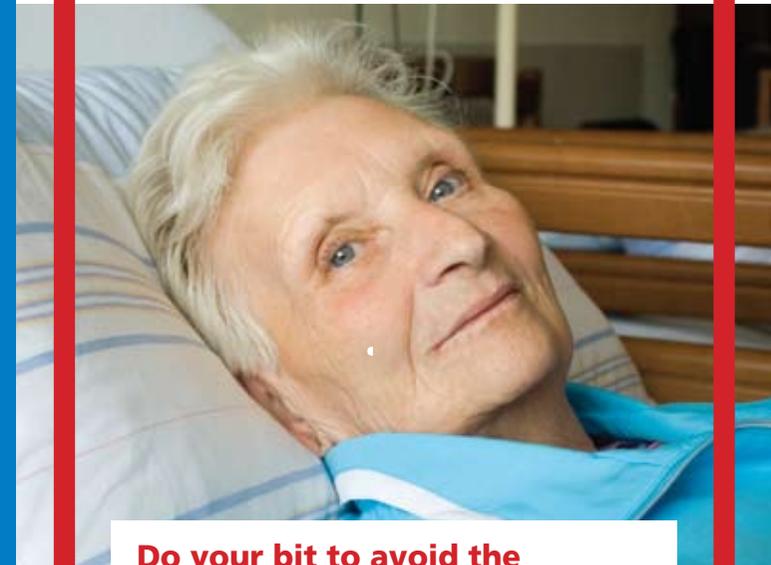
Wash your hands frequently with warm water and liquid soap – especially after using the toilet or before handling food. Alcohol gel doesn't work against norovirus.

Do not handle or prepare food for anyone until 48 hours after the symptoms of norovirus have ceased.

**For more information on norovirus, visit: [www.bristol.nhs.uk](http://www.bristol.nhs.uk)**

For further copies of this leaflet or if you would like it in other formats or languages, please contact NHS Bristol strategic communications department on 0117 984 1574.

*“If you visit me when you're ill, you could be making me worse...”*



**Do your bit to avoid the spread of infection - if you've been sick or had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours, stay away from hospital**

# Norovirus – get the facts

## What is norovirus?

Norovirus isn't one virus – it's a group of viruses that cause stomach bugs in people. It's also known as the 'winter vomiting bug'.

## How does it spread?

Norovirus is easily spread from one person to another. It can be caught from contact with an infected person, by consuming contaminated food or water, or contact with contaminated surfaces, objects or people.

## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of norovirus infection begin around 12 – 48 hours after the patient becomes infected and can last between 12 – 60 hours.

The symptoms include the sudden onset of nausea followed by projectile vomiting and diarrhoea. Some people might get a high temperature, headaches and aching limbs. Most people fully recover within one to two days, but some people – often the very young or elderly – may require hospital treatment.

## Why does norovirus cause outbreaks?

Norovirus can cause outbreaks because it is easily spread from one person to another. The virus can also survive for days. Also, as there are a number of different strains of norovirus, previous infection offers little protection against becoming infected again.

Outbreaks tend to affect more than 50% of susceptible people. They usually happen in a semi-closed environment, like nursing homes, schools, or hospitals.

## How can these outbreaks be stopped?

Outbreaks can be difficult to control and long-lasting because the virus can be easily spread from one person to another and can survive in the atmosphere for a long time.

The best way of stopping an outbreak is by disinfecting the contaminated area and ensuring good hygiene – for example thorough hand-washing with soap and water and scrupulous food hygiene.

Anyone who has the symptoms of norovirus should be isolated or avoid contact with others for a minimum of 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped. If you have had norovirus, you should not go to work until you have been symptom free for over 48 hours.

## How do we treat norovirus?

There is no specific treatment for norovirus apart from letting the illness run its course. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to replace those that have been lost and avoid dehydration. Medical advice should be sought if the symptoms haven't gone away after 60 hours.

## If I'm suffering from norovirus, how can I stop others being infected?

Good hygiene is essential in containing norovirus. Make sure that you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before contact with an infected person.

If you have norovirus, do not handle or prepare food for other people, avoid going to hospital to visit friends or relatives for at least 48 hours until you are symptom free.

## Who is at risk of catching norovirus?

No specific group is more at-risk of catching norovirus. People of all ages can be infected. The very young and the elderly should take extra care if infected, as dehydration is more common in these age groups.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) says outbreaks can be shortened when control measures are implemented quickly. This may mean that hospital wards or care homes restrict access. This does not mean that they are not clean – access is restricted to ensure that the virus does not spread.