



Guidance for Mitigation of Norovirus in Community Congregate Settings

Background

Noroviruses are a group of related viruses. Infection with these viruses causes an illness called gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Norovirus is a very contagious virus that spreads person-to-person and causes vomiting and diarrhea. You can get norovirus by accidentally getting tiny particles of stool or vomit in your mouth from a person infected with norovirus. There are several prevention measures that can be put in place to prevent the spread norovirus in community congregate settings, proper food preparation, following [contact](#) and [standard precautions](#).

Symptoms Associated with Norovirus:

Symptoms associated with norovirus include:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches

How long does it take from exposure to onset of symptoms?

A person usually develops symptoms 12–48 hours after being exposed to norovirus. You are most contagious when you have symptoms like vomiting and during the first few days after you feel better. You can still spread norovirus for 2 or more weeks after feeling better.

Risk Factors Associated with Contracting Norovirus:

Risk factors for becoming infected with a norovirus include:

- Eating in a place where food has been handled by someone with norovirus infection or the food has been in contact with contaminated water or surfaces.
- Attending preschool or a childcare center
- Living in close quarters with others, such as in nursing homes and congregate living settings
- Staying in hotels, resorts, cruise ships or other destinations with many people in close quarters
- Having contact with someone who has norovirus infection.

Immediate Next Steps for Case Treatment and Monitoring:

Upon the identification of a resident or staff with symptoms consistent with norovirus:

1. If a staff member develops symptoms, ask them to return home. All staff should be excluded from work for a minimum of 48 hours after the resolution of symptoms. If the staff member works in dietary and handles food, they should receive a note from their provider to return to work, when possible. If a resident is displaying symptoms, they should be isolated away from others and, if possible, have their own bathroom. If having a separate bathroom for infected residents is not possible, a separate stall

may be an alternative that can reduce contact with the infected individuals' feces. If a separate isolation space is not available, the facility should prioritize cohorting sick residents together with others who have like-symptoms and physically separate them from those who remain asymptomatic, to the best of their ability.

2. **Facility staff should ensure proper cleaning and disinfection is occurring after each use by the case.** To disinfect, use a chlorine bleach solution comprised of 5 to 25 tablespoons of bleach in 1 gallon of water, or use an EPA-registered cleaning agent: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-antimicrobial-products-registered-epa-claims-against-norovirus-feline>

Learn more on the difference between cleaning and disinfecting here:
https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/pdf/331782-a_cleaning_sanitizing_disinfecting_508.pdf

3. Following a diagnosis, residents should be placed under [contact precautions](#) (all staff should wear gloves when handling or cleaning any bodily fluids) and avoid contact with other residents for the duration of their illness.
4. Residents should continue to be monitored for signs of dehydration which include decreased urination, dry mouth and throat, and dizziness when standing up. If this occurs, they should be referred to a healthcare provider or transferred to the hospital.
5. Facilities should report clusters of acute gastroenteritis to the Special Populations team at the Chicago Department of Public Health to report any cases of here: <https://redcap.link/specpopreport>

Preventing Norovirus:

Norovirus is very contagious, but you can take steps to stop it from spreading.

- Wash hands well with soap and water
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas with bleach.
- Wash laundry in hot water
- Handle and prepare food safely: Learn more at [Food Safety Home Page | CDC](#)

Organization	Contact Information:
CDPH Community Congregate Settings Team	Email: SpecialPops@cityofchicago.org Reporting Link: https://redcap.link/specpopreport