



OUTBREAK DETECTION



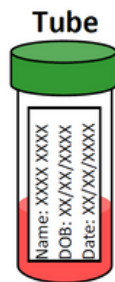
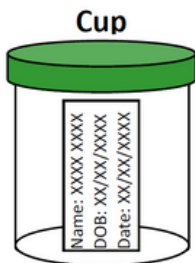
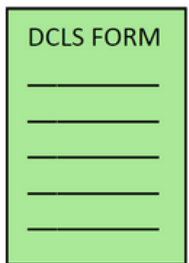
It is essential to begin investigating a gastrointestinal illness outbreak early on to contain the spread of illness. Individual norovirus infection is not a nationally notifiable disease, but outbreaks should be reported by calling your local health department (LHD) when there is a presence of more cases of diarrhea or vomiting than would usually be expected in the facility, or in a particular unit, for that time of year. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if you are dealing with norovirus or a bacteria at the beginning of an investigation. Norovirus has an incubation period of 1-2 days with a sudden onset of vomiting and diarrhea. The LHD can conduct an investigation to determine the cause of the outbreak, identify risk factors for infection, identify and confirm the strain of norovirus, provide guidance on outbreak management and control, and educate the public on how to prevent further infections. Here are some things to keep in mind when contacting your LHD.

- What date did the earliest illness start? When did the other illnesses occur?
- How many residents do you have in the facility? How many have been ill?
- What symptoms did ill individuals have? What is the approximate duration of illness?
- Have the ill individuals been in one unit or wing, or spread across the facility?
- Have any dietary or food staff been ill?

Use the sample line list that's provided in the Resource section to keep track of ill persons. This will help assess how the outbreak is evolving, and determine when the outbreak is over. At least 2 positive norovirus lab results are needed to confirm an outbreak. The LHD can provide stool collection kits for stool specimens to be tested at the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS), the Virginia Public Health Lab. The LHD will coordinate transporting specimens to DCLS. Below is a link to a video that provides step by step instructions on how to collect stool for lab testing. There are patient instructions for stool collection in the Resource section.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfSEV8o6-wY>

Notify your local health department if specimens were tested at a clinical laboratory.





PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Anyone can get norovirus illness. The virus spreads easily, quickly, and in many different ways. Norovirus illness can be serious and it can make you feel extremely sick with diarrhea and vomiting many times a day. There's no vaccine to prevent norovirus infection or drugs to treat it. It is important to prevent norovirus from spreading. The best ways to prevent contracting, or spreading the virus is by washing your hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, and staying home from work or school if ill. You should wash your hands before handling food and after using the restroom. It is important to wash your hands often if you're caring for someone who is ill, especially after changing diapers or cleaning up diarrhea or vomiting episodes. Proper hand washing plays a large role in preventing the spread of norovirus. Here's a list of control measures that can be implemented to prevent the spread of norovirus in any setting.

Control Measures:

- **Increase awareness of hand hygiene-** Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, changing diapers, and before preparing food.
- **Exclude ill people-** Stay home from work and school, and do not care for others for at least 24 hours after symptoms stop.
- **Increase frequency of environmental cleaning-** Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces with a bleach-based household cleaner immediately after vomiting or diarrheal accidents. Alert cleaning staff of the outbreak so that they can take steps to protect themselves when cleaning potentially infectious materials.
- **Handle and prepare food safely-** Carefully wash fruits and vegetables before preparing and eating, and do not prepare food for others for 24 hours after symptoms stop.
- **Wash laundry thoroughly-** Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may have vomit or poop on it. Handle items carefully—try not to agitate them. If available, wear disposable gloves to handle soiled clothing or linens, and wash your hands after. Wash soiled items with detergent and hot water at the maximum available cycle length then machine dry them at the highest heat setting.
- **Letter sent home-** In some instances it may be necessary to notify parents or family members of the outbreak. It is important to keep sick children home from the facility until they recover. Some facilities may want to send letters to family members to reduce the amount of visitors.
- **Provide health education-** Increase the general awareness of the virus and teach people how to protect themselves and others.
- **Signage posted-** Utilize prevention publications in the Resource section to increase awareness of the virus as well as promoting practices to stop the spread of the virus.



CLEAN UP & DISINFECTION



IF CLOTHING OR OTHER FABRICS ARE AFFECTED...

- Remove and wash all clothing or fabric that may have touched vomit or diarrhea

- Machine wash these items with detergent, hot water and **bleach** if recommended, choosing the longest wash cycle

- Machine dry



CDC

Norovirus causes vomiting and diarrhea that comes on suddenly, often before someone ill can make it to a bathroom. Always thoroughly clean and disinfect the entire area immediately where the episode occurred. Anything that has come in contact with vomit and diarrhea should be discarded or disinfected. Put on rubber or disposable gloves before cleaning up any bodily fluids or handling disinfectants. Publications are provided in the Resource section that will go into further detail about directions for responding to any vomiting or diarrheal accident. Below are basic guidelines to follow during the clean up and disinfection processes.

Clean Up:

- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable masks, gloves, eye-shields, and plastic disposable gowns.
- Use paper towels to soak up excess vomit and diarrhea and **never use a vacuum**. Transfer these and any solid matter into a plastic bag to be discarded.
- Clean the soiled area with soap and hot water, using a disposable cloth.
- Clean all nearby high-touch surfaces such as door knobs.
- Rinse thoroughly with plain water.
- Wipe dry with paper towels.

Disinfection:

- Spray or pour a bleach-based household cleaner, as directed, on the product label or other sanitizer approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on all surfaces that may have come in contact with vomit or poop.
- Leave the surface wet for at least 5 minutes.
- Clean all surfaces again with soap and hot water.
- Remove all PPE and place them in a plastic bag. Seal and discard.
- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then dry them thoroughly. Hand sanitizers may not be effective against norovirus.

High contact surfaces should be routinely cleaned and disinfected during a norovirus outbreak. This includes door knobs, toilet handles, handrails, ice machines, eating utensils, etc. Remove potential sources of transmission such as candy dishes, fruit baskets, communal water jugs, etc.