

FACT SHEET

NOROVIRUS

(Norwalk-like virus, cruise ship diarrhea, winter vomiting disease)

<i>What is the disease?</i>	A diarrheal illness caused by a group of viruses. It is a common source of outbreaks often associated with food service.
<i>How is it spread?</i>	It is usually spread from an infected person's unwashed hands touching food that another person eats (fecal/oral route). Also spread by contaminated food or contaminated environment (faucets, doorknobs).
<i>What is the incubation period?</i>	The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is usually 24-48 hours with a range of 10-50 hours.
<i>What are the early signs?</i>	Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches, and sometimes a low-grade fever. Symptoms are self-limiting; they go away after 24-72 hours.
<i>What about contacts?</i>	Contacts should not share, prepare, or serve food to others until 48 hours after exposure.
<i>How long is the person contagious?</i>	A person is able to spread the disease as long as he/she has symptoms and up to 48 hours after symptoms end. Good hand washing is a must!
<i>When is it OK to return to school/work?</i>	A person may return to school/work once they are symptom-free for 48 hours. Encourage good hand washing before meals and throughout the day.
<i>What else should I know?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no medicine for this disease. A virus causes this illness, so antibiotics will not work. • Wash hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before eating or preparing food. Wash hands with warm soapy water for 15-20 seconds. Scrub between fingers and under nails. Use paper towel to turn off faucet and open restroom door. • Do not send a sick child to school! • Do not go to work if you are ill.

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Contact your healthcare provider if you have concerns regarding your health or your child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5267 or 373-5264.

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