

FACT SHEET

# NOROVIRUS

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

<b><i>What is the disease?</i></b>	A diarrheal illness caused by a group of viruses. It is a common source of outbreaks often associated with food service.
<b><i>How is it spread?</i></b>	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).
<b><i>What is the incubation period?</i></b>	The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is usually 24-48 hours with a range of 10-50 hours.
<b><i>What are the early signs?</i></b>	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.
<b><i>What about contacts?</i></b>	Contacts should not share, prepare, or serve food to others until 48 hours after exposure.
<b><i>How long is the person contagious?</i></b>	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!
<b><i>When is it OK to return to school/work?</i></b>	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.
<b><i>What else should I know?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no medicine for this disease. A virus causes this illness, so antibiotics will not work.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• <b>Do not send a sick child to school!</b></li> <li>• <b>Do not go to work if you are ill.</b></li> </ul>

*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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**KALAMAZOO COUNTY**  
**HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

*Promoting Health For All*

## **Norovirus Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines**

**General Warning: Chlorine bleach is corrosive and irritating to mucosal tissue, skin, eyes and respiratory tract. Please read the label and follow all manufacturer's recommendations and warnings. Avoid spray bottle application and use only in a well-ventilated area. Chlorine bleach may damage fabrics and other surfaces. Please spot test an area before applying to a surface**

### **Examples of items to disinfect:**

Doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, commodes, bath rails, phones, counters, chairs (including backs), tables, hand rails, light switches, keyboards, etc. within a 25 foot radius of a vomiting incident. Steam clean carpets /upholstery and launder any clothes/linens contaminated with vomit or feces.

**What works best:** Chlorine bleach (regular, not splashless type). A new bottle of bleach should be used, if possible, as bleach may lose its effectiveness after being open for more than 30 days.

### **Chlorine bleach concentrations and mixing instructions:**

- **For stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, toys**
  - 1 Tablespoon of bleach in 1-gallon water
- **For non-porous surfaces, tile floors, counter-tops, sinks, toilets**
  - 1/3-cup bleach in 1-gallon water
- **For porous surfaces, wooden floors**
  - 1 ½ cups bleach in 1-gallon water

### **Specific Clean-up Procedures**

1. Pre-clean any visible vomit or feces with paper towel or other absorbent material and place in trash.
2. Disinfect area and objects surrounding where the vomiting or diarrhea occurred with the appropriate bleach dilution.
3. Seal and discard trash immediately

### **Hard surfaces**

- Disinfect with appropriate bleach solution, rinse with water if food preparation area. A bucket of bleach solution and rag are suggested. Clean the least contaminated areas first, leaving the most contaminated areas for last.

### **Carpet / Upholstered Furniture**

- Visible vomit or feces should be cleaned with disposable paper towel or other absorbent material and placed in the trash. Disinfecting with bleach may discolor carpet or upholstery – steam cleaning should be used.

### **Linens / clothing / textiles**

- Visible vomit or feces should be carefully removed with disposable paper towel or other absorbent material and placed in the trash. Keep contaminated clothes/linens separated from uncontaminated laundry. Minimize the handling of soiled items and wash immediately. Wash items in a pre-wash cycle first, then use a regular wash cycle and detergent at the hottest setting safe for the fabrics. Dry separately from uncontaminated clothing at the highest temperature safe for the fabric.