

Guidance on managing outbreaks of norovirus in schools and nurseries

Norovirus, also called the 'winter vomiting bug', is a stomach bug that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. It can be very unpleasant, but usually goes away in about 2 days. Symptoms start suddenly, within 1-2 days of being infected.

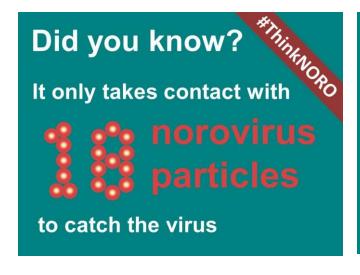
Main symptoms of norovirus:

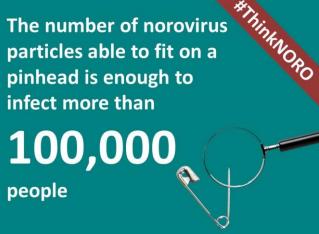
- nausea feeling sick
- vomiting being sick
- diarrhoea

A person may also have:

- a raised temperature
- a headache
- aching arms and legs

How contagious is norovirus?





- Norovirus outbreak definition: a greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred
- Response: follow your local arrangements for reporting outbreaks

How norovirus is spread

- Close contact: contact with someone infected with norovirus
- Contaminated surfaces: touching infected surfaces or objects, then touching your mouth
- Contaminated food: eating food prepared or handled by someone with norovirus

How to limit spread of norovirus

- Good hand hygiene: especially after going to the toilet and before eating or preparing food. Alcohol-based gels are not effective against norovirus use liquid soap and water
- Exclusion: staff and pupils with norovirus symptoms should not attend school until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours
- Adequate supplies: make sure you have adequate supplies of vomit bags in all areas and that these are accessible to staff and pupils
- **Isolating affected areas:** if a child vomits in the classroom, section the area off and ensure it is not used until fully deep cleaned cleaning guidance is available in the <u>Health protection in</u> children and young people settings, including education information online
- **Isolating individuals:** the affected child should be isolated, if possible, from their classmates until collected by their parent/guardian
- Increase cleaning of touch points: cleaning guidance is available online in the information on <u>Health protection in children and young people settings, including education</u>
- **Diarrhoea and vomiting checklist:** use the action checklist on the <u>Children and young</u> people settings: tools and resources

Reporting an outbreak of norovirus to UKHSA

Call the UKHSA West Midlands Health Protection Team on 0344 225 3560, Option 2

What UKHSA will ask for:

- Setting: name and address, including postcode
- Contact person: name and phone number and email
- Type of setting: for example, nursery or special educational needs (SEN) school
- Total numbers affected: children, young people and staff (including non-teaching staff)
- Food handlers: if any food handlers have been affected
- Total numbers attending children, young people, and staff
- Areas affected: number of classes, rooms year groups (including nursery if applicable)
- Symptoms: list of all symptoms experienced
- Onset: date when symptoms started, including brief overview of sequence of numbers of new cases since first (index) case
- Episodes of illness: have any staff/children vomited or had diarrhoea within the setting
- Severity: any indications of severe disease, such as overnight admissions to hospital
- Events or trips: details of any events or trips in the week prior to the start of the outbreak
- **Testing:** if any tests or clinical assessments have taken place (if known)
- Clinically vulnerable: if there are any individuals within the affected group at higher risk from severe disease (eg chronic conditions, suppressed immunity, pregnant staff)

National guidance

National guidance <u>Health protection in children and young people settings, including education</u> is available online at GOV.UK. The following are links to individual chapters, for ease of reading:

1	Infections in childcare settings	<u>Infections</u>
2	Preventing and controlling infections (includes cleaning guidance)	Prevention and control
3	Guidance for handwashing	How to wash your hands – NHS Hand hygiene poster
4	e-Bug resources	e-bug
5	Managing outbreaks and incidents	Advice for all outbreaks
6	Specific educational settings and populations – additional considerations	Includes: • Early years or pre-school • Special Educational Needs (SEN) • Residential educational settings
7	Children and young people settings – tools and resources	Includes: • Exclusion table • Posters • Diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak – action checklist • Meningitis or septicaemia – action checklist

See our online blog – *Norovirus: What to do if you catch it and helping to stop the spread*

You can also look at the norovirus information on the NHS website or visit NHS111 online