

Norovirus

Schools guide

for early years professionals

This pack contains

- Information on the Norovirus aka the 'winter vomiting bug'
- Advice on limiting the spread of norovirus in your school
- Guidance on how symptoms can be treated
- A print-out to give to parents and carers



Diarrhoea and vomiting in children
There's no specific cure for stomach bugs such as **Norovirus**

Keep kids home from school for

48 HOURS

after symptoms have passed.
This is enough time to let the virus run its course

If your child already has a serious illness, or symptoms last longer than a few days, contact your GP to seek advice
Visit [nhs.uk/norovirus](https://www.nhs.uk/norovirus) for more

Washing hands frequently and thoroughly helps limit the spread of the virus

25 different strains of norovirus are known to affect humans.
They're the most common cause of stomach bugs in the UK

Home Treatment

Liquid paracetamol is useful for fever or aches and pains

Give kids plenty of water to stay hydrated and replace lost fluids

If your child feels like eating, give them foods that are easy to digest

NHS choices Food Standards Agency food.gov.uk

Norovirus schools guide

Norovirus, also known as the winter vomiting bug, is the most common stomach bug in the UK. NHS Choices, in collaboration with the Food Standards Agency, has put together this useful guide and print-out to help schools and parents understand Norovirus, from detection to prevention.

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is highly contagious, and is particularly prevalent in schools and nurseries as the virus can survive for several days on surfaces or objects. It can, however, affect people of all ages and cause vomiting and diarrhoea. There is no cure for Norovirus, so it has to be left to run its course. The symptoms are unpleasant and can initially be quite distressing, but they shouldn't last more than a couple of days. Adults and children with Norovirus symptoms should avoid visiting GP surgeries or hospitals to prevent the further spread of Norovirus.

Because the virus is highly contagious, **children who have Norovirus symptoms must remain off school or nursery for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea to stop the spread of infection with other children or staff.**

Different types of Norovirus

Norovirus is the most common cause of stomach bugs in the UK, with at least 25 different strains known to affect humans. Each year, it's estimated that between 600,000 and 1 million people in the UK catch Norovirus – because there are so many strains, we don't develop an immunity to it. The virus is sometimes called the "winter vomiting bug" because it's more common in winter. However, you can catch the virus at any time of the year.

How do you treat Norovirus?

To treat the symptoms of Norovirus, we recommend the following for children and young people:

- Ensure they are drinking plenty of water to avoid dehydration
- Give them liquid paracetamol for any fever or aches and pains
- If they feel like eating, give them easy to digest foods such as bananas, or brown rice.
- Stay at home – There is nothing the GP can prescribe for sickness and diarrhoea, although your local chemist may be able to provide rehydration solutions
- Contact your GP or NHS 111 to seek advice if the symptoms last longer than a few days or visit [nhs.uk/norovirus](https://www.nhs.uk/norovirus) for more information

Preventing Norovirus spread

Norovirus is easily spread and you can catch it simply by touching contaminated surfaces or objects.

Early years staff, teachers, school staff, and parents can help to prevent the spread of Norovirus by:

- Washing hands frequently with household soap, and encouraging children to do the same – especially after toileting
- Ensuring that any infected child is not sharing things such as toys, blankets etc.
- Keeping any child with Norovirus symptoms home from school and away from other children where possible. Children with Norovirus should also avoid contact with vulnerable adults such as elderly relatives

It is also important that schools and nurseries thoroughly disinfect all surfaces that an infected person may have come into contact with whenever possible. Alcohol-based hand-gels are not effective against the Norovirus.

For further information visit nhs.uk/norovirus or contact NHS111.

You may wish to talk to your school nurse about infection control and materials that can be used in schools to increase pupil or parent awareness

Project background

NHS Choices and the Food Standards Agency have this year conducted a significant research project looking at how we can best tackle some of the issues of misinformation surrounding winter vomiting bugs.

The information in this pack has been produced to empower teachers and school nurses to help stop the spread of Norovirus, and to enable parents and guardians to react to the virus effectively and without putting others at risk. By distributing the information within this pack, you are helping to reduce the spread of a highly-contagious virus that puts many NHS services under great pressure, and which can seriously affect the health of some vulnerable groups.

This material forms part of a wider digital campaign to help the public understand Norovirus, to be launched later this Winter.

Notes for teachers and school nurses

- The black and white version of the poster has been produced to keep the costs of printing at a minimum should they choose, while we recommend that schools add the colour version to their website and signpost parents and guardians to the documents.
- Our user research suggests that parents are a key group to target with Norovirus information as they are amongst the most likely to take their child to a GP or hospital with Norovirus symptoms – a major cause of infectious spread
- General understanding of the term “Norovirus” is low, and it may be more helpful to refer to the symptoms (diarrhoea and vomiting) in communications to parents

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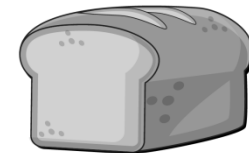
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