

# Fact Sheet

## Norovirus

### What are noroviruses?

The term "norovirus" is the name for a group of viruses that cause stomach illness. Norovirus illnesses are common and affect all age groups. They occur anytime but are more common in the winter.

### What are the symptoms?

The usual symptoms are:

- Nausea
- Throwing up
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pains

Sometimes there is a little fever, chills, muscle aches and feeling tired. The illness usually begins quickly and lasts 1 to 3 days.

### Who can get it?

Anyone can get a norovirus and get sick. Also, you can have norovirus illness many times in your life. Norovirus illness can be serious, especially for children and elders.

### How does a person get it?

The infection is spread mainly through contact with the throw up or stool of a person sick with norovirus. The virus can spread easily from person to person and can also spread through food, water or ice that has been touched by a sick person.

Norovirus can spread quickly in places like daycare centers, schools, and airplanes. The highest number of norovirus illnesses happens from November to April in Canada.

### What is the treatment for it?

People usually do not need medicine; people should feel better in about 48 hours. A sick person should call a healthcare provider if throwing up or diarrhea lasts more than 2 to 3 days.

### How can it be prevented?

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers, and always before eating, cutting, or cooking food.
- Wash raw vegetables and fruit well before eating.
- When you are sick, do not cook food or care for other people.
- Clean throw up and stool well and make sure to throw away clothes used for cleaning.
- Wash dirty clothes and bed sheets or blankets well, in hot water if possible.