

# Norwalk

## What is Norwalk?

- It is a gastrointestinal disease caused by the Norwalk or Norwalk-like virus.

## How does a person get Norwalk?

- Norwalk is spread by:
  - person-to-person contact if hands are not washed thoroughly
  - drinking water or eating food contaminated with the virus
  - contact with contaminated surfaces such as doorknobs, railings, taps and/or
  - contact with infected stool.
- The virus may be spread through the air when an infected person vomits.
- Outbreaks of Norwalk commonly occur in long-term care facilities, hospitals, schools and cruise ships.
- This virus often causes foodborne outbreaks.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

- Symptoms may include abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and low grade fever.
- Symptoms usually develop 24 to 48 hours after a person has become infected.
- The illness usually lasts 48 hours.

## How is Norwalk treated?

- Most people recover on their own without treatment.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace water lost through diarrhea. If more severe, see your doctor.

## How is Norwalk prevented?

- Always wash hands:
  - after using the toilet
  - after diapering a child
  - before preparing or handling food
  - before eating.
- Use alcohol-based hand gel frequently when handwashing is not possible.
- Cook foods thoroughly.
- Clean all surfaces thoroughly especially taps, railings, door handles, counters.
- Do not attend daycare, school or place of work while symptoms are present and for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.
- If travelling internationally refer to “Food and Water Safety”.

### Quick Facts

- it is a diarrhea illness
- outbreaks commonly occur in long-term care facilities
- good handwashing reduces spread

For more information contact your doctor or Public Health Services at **655-4612**