



2 November 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

As winter approaches, we thought it prudent to share information with you regarding Norovirus. This information has been provided by the NHS.

Norovirus, also known as the winter vomiting bug, is the most common stomach bug in the UK. It is highly contagious, can affect people of all ages and causes vomiting and diarrhoea. There is no specific cure, so you have to let the virus run its course. It is usually mild and shouldn't last more than a couple of days.

The period from when you are infected to when symptoms appear (the incubation period), usually lasts between twelve and forty-eight hours and you may be infectious to other people during this time.

Norovirus is spread easily. If an infected person doesn't wash their hands, they can pass the virus on to others. You can also catch it by touching contaminated surfaces or objects.

Washing your hands frequently and disinfecting surfaces that an infected person has touched can help prevent the virus spreading.

To help prevent Norovirus from spreading in schools, Public Health England recommend that affected students should not return to college for forty-eight hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. Please help us to keep infections to a minimum by following this guidance.

Although having norovirus can be unpleasant, it is not usually dangerous and most people make a full recovery within a couple of days, without having to see their GP.

There is more information attached and you can learn more about Norovirus and how to help prevent it spreading here:

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Norovirus/Pages/Prevention.aspx

Thank you.

The Spires College



Stop norovirus spreading this winter

Norovirus, sometimes known as the ‘winter vomiting bug’, is the **most common stomach bug** in the UK, affecting people of all ages. It is **highly contagious** and is transmitted by contact with contaminated surfaces, an infected person, or consumption of contaminated food or water.

The symptoms of norovirus are very distinctive – people often report a sudden onset of **nausea** followed by **projectile vomiting and watery diarrhoea**.



Good hand hygiene is important to stop the spread of the virus.

People are advised to:

- Wash their hands thoroughly using soap and water and drying them after using the toilet, before preparing food and eating
- Not rely on alcohol gels as these do not kill the virus

An infection with norovirus is self-limiting and most people will make a full recovery in 1-2 days. It is important to keep hydrated – especially children and the elderly.

Do not visit either A&E or GPs with symptoms as this may spread the virus.

Further information and advice is available from NHS 111, including an online symptom checker at [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk).



PATIENT INFORMATION

The Facts about Hand Hygiene

Introduction

Hand washing is a simple procedure that we all think we know how to do, and were probably taught as young children. Research shows that this is not the case. If hand washing is performed correctly, it contributes more than any other single action in controlling infection.

Why do we need to wash our hands?

Our hands are frequently contaminated throughout the day with germs, which cannot be seen with the naked eye. Our hands may appear clean but the germs will be there! There are two categories of germs that are carried out on our hands:

- **Resident** – these are deep within the skin and are part of our body's natural defences.
- **Transient** – these are on the surface of our skin and are transferred easily to other people and objects.

How should we wash our hands?

- Wet hands thoroughly before applying soap.
- Apply soap.
- Vigorously massage surfaces of both hands, ensuring a good lather.
- Pay particular attention to the fingertips, thumbs and between the fingers as these are areas that are frequently missed.
- If you wear rings it is important that you move them and wash underneath.
- Rinse hands thoroughly ensuring that you remove all soap, as if not completely rinsed off, your hands can become sore.
- Dry hands thoroughly as damp hands encourage germs to survive
- After using the toilet.
- Before eating or handling food.
- When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated.

When should healthcare workers wash their hands?

Staff working for South Devon Healthcare Trust are encouraged to wash their hands or use alcohol hand gel between each patient contact.

They **must** wash their hands:

- When arriving on duty and before leaving the ward or department.
- After toileting others.
- Before and after aseptic procedures i.e. changing dressings, examining wounds, changing bags of infusion (drip) fluids.
- Before handling food, drink and medicines.
- After carrying out any potentially infective procedures.
- After removing gloves.
- When hands are visibly contaminated.

If you notice that a member of staff has not washed their hands or used alcohol hand gel please do not be afraid to ask them to do so.

If you require further advice after reading this leaflet please contact the Infection Control Support Department on ☎ (01803) 655757 and ask to speak to one of the Infection Control Nurses.

References:

South Devon Healthcare Trust “Hand Decontamination Policy” - 2010

“Five moments for Hand Hygiene” – Clean your Hands Campaign – NPSA - 2010