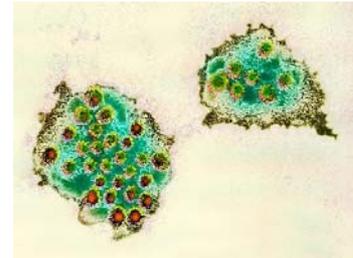


**Managers - Please ensure all employees receive a copy of this Safety Action Bulletin
Especially food handlers and cleaning services**

For: Heads of all Establishments/Settings
OCC Managers
Governors/Management Committees
Trade Union Safety Representatives
Employee Noticeboards
Intranet

Issue SAB 21
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Increasing Norovirus Activity

Background

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has warned of increasing norovirus activity. The norovirus group of viruses is the most common cause of gastroenteritis (upset stomach) in the UK. They are sometimes called 'winter vomiting disease', because people often get them during the winter months. However, they can occur at any time of the year with the majority of cases occurring around October to April.

General Information

How noroviruses are spread

- Norovirus is highly contagious and spreads easily from person to person contact.
- It can be transmitted by consuming contaminated food or water or by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.
- Norovirus can survive for several days in a contaminated area.
- The virus spreads rapidly in closed environments such as schools, nursing and residential homes.

Symptoms

The symptoms of a norovirus infection usually start one to two days after becoming infected; however they can start after 12 hours. The first symptom is usually a sudden onset of nausea, which is followed by projectile vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Other symptoms include:

- A raised temperature (over 38°C/100.4°F).
- Headaches.
- Stomach cramps.
- Aching limbs.

Symptoms normally last from 12 to 60 hours but most people make a full recovery in within two to three days. There are no long-lasting effects from having a norovirus infection.

If symptoms persist, or seem to be getting worse, then you should ask for a telephone consultation with your GP or call NHS Direct (0845 46 47).

Issued by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Shared Services, Unipart House, Garsington Road, OXFORD, OX4 2GQ

N.B. After having a norovirus infection it is possible to become infected again, because immunity to the virus only lasts for a short period of time.

Advice on controlling and managing a bout of norovirus

- Make good hygiene especially important in preventing yourself and others from being infected, this includes good hand washing, especially after using the toilet and before and after handling or preparing food before eating.
- Any contaminated surfaces should be thoroughly disinfected after an episode of illness.
- If you are infected by the norovirus you should avoid visiting friends or relatives in hospitals, nursing or residential care homes and you should stay away from others until you are symptom free, usually two to three days.
- Do not visit your GP surgery or local A&E department as this could spread the illness to vulnerable people and healthcare workers.
- Norovirus is a self-limiting illness and you will recover naturally without treatment. It is, however, important to take plenty of drinks to replace lost fluid and to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- It is particularly important for those caring for young children or the elderly to ensure that they are well hydrated.
- Use NHS Direct’s new diarrhoea and vomiting online health and symptom checker, to get advice on how to manage your symptoms at home or help access the most appropriate health service.
- Use hand gel sanitizers.

What should a manager do if two or more people are affected?

- Contact the HPA (0845 279 9879) and report the issue. The HPA will be able to provide advice and guidance on what to do.
- Advise the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team (01865 797 222) and report on the online reporting system as an incident.
- Advise employees/volunteers, a parents/carer/guardian, children and clients that they should not attend the work/school/day care centre etc. setting should they be suffering from the symptoms detailed in this bulletin.
- Stay away from school/care settings until symptom free, usually two to three days.
- Ensure elderly and/or vulnerable clients have someone to care for them and ensure they are kept hydrated.
- Promoted hand hygiene practices and ensure surfaces, handrails, doors etc. are cleaned/wiped down.

Based on advice provided by:

- Health Protection Agency
- NHS Direct
- NHS Choices.



For Further Information and Advice:

	Email and web addresses	
Specialist:		
Health Protection Agency	www.hpa.org.uk	0845 279 9879

NHS Direct	www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk	0845 46 47
NHS Choices	www.nhs.uk	-
General:		
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety	01865 797222