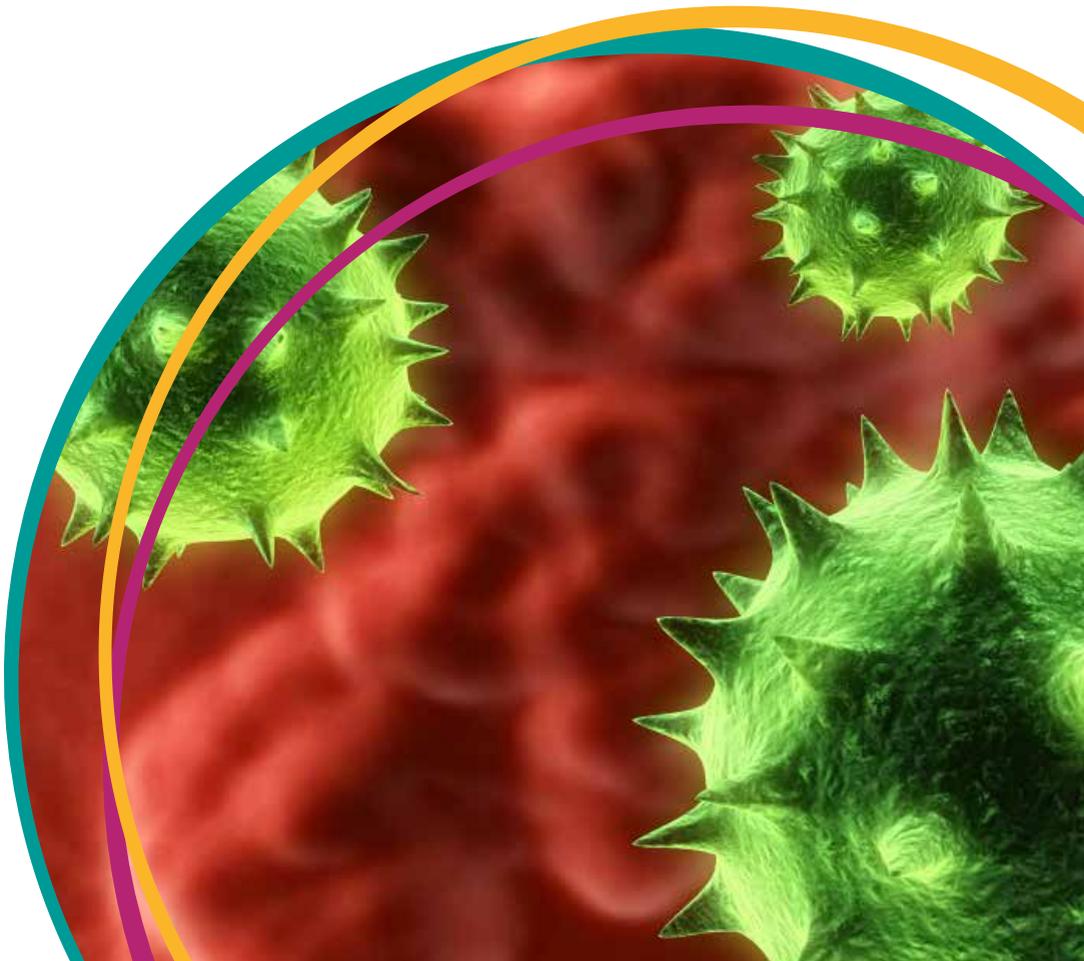




**Countess of
Chester Hospital**
NHS Foundation Trust

Norovirus

Information for patients, staff and relatives



What is Norovirus?

Norovirus belongs to a group of viruses that are the most common cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the UK. They are also known as “small round structured viruses” (SRSV) or “Norwalk-like viruses”.

The Norovirus infection is also referred to as “winter vomiting disease” because people often develop this during the winter months. However, it can occur at any time of the year. It is a common cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the community and can enter hospitals via visitors, patients or staff. This virus has a significant impact on the NHS every year as wards may need to be closed to prevent spread.

Why is it a problem?

Norovirus is brought into the hospital by individuals who are symptomatic with vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or who are incubating the illness and develop symptoms unexpectedly while in the hospital. This can be patients, relatives, visitors or staff. Norovirus can spread very easily in the hospital due to the close contact between patients, visitors and staff and can survive for several days in a contaminated area.

How is it spread?

It can be spread through contact with an infected person, through contact with surfaces or objects that are contaminated with the virus, or by consuming contaminated food or water.

How do you stop Norovirus spreading?

The main ways to prevent Norovirus from spreading are:

- Thorough hand washing using soap and water following any contact with a symptomatic individual and especially after using the toilet and before eating.
- Caring for patients with vomiting and diarrhoea in a single room or on a closed ward.
- Staff using gloves and aprons when providing close personal care for symptomatic patients, followed by thorough hand washing with soap and water.
- Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward environment, toilets, commodes and other equipment.
- Regular changing and washing of linen, clothing and towels.
- Avoiding visiting the hospital if you are unwell.

How will I know if I have Norovirus?

Norovirus symptoms usually start one to two days after becoming infected, but it can be as little as 12 hours, with symptoms generally lasting for 2-3 days.

The first symptom is usually the sudden onset of nausea, which is followed by projectile vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Some people may also have a raised temperature (over 38°C), headaches, stomach cramps or aching limbs.

Norovirus can be detected within the laboratory from stool specimens; however, diagnosis can also be made based on symptoms.

What will happen to me if I get Norovirus?

You may be moved to a single room until you are free of symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours. If a number of people on the ward also develop this illness, the ward may be closed as a preventative measure. This is to help limit the spread of this infection to others.

Can Norovirus be treated?

Norovirus has no long-term effects and is generally 'self-limiting', which means it gets better without treatment. Antibiotics have no effect upon Norovirus.

It is important to make sure that you drink plenty of fluids when possible, unless otherwise directed by staff and also to rest. You will still receive all the treatment you need. However, some non-urgent investigations may be postponed until you have recovered.

Can I have visitors?

Visiting restrictions will be implemented on wards that are closed due to Norovirus and may also be put in place within other areas of the hospital. This is to help the hospital control the spread of this infection. Please ask a member of ward staff if you require more information on visiting restrictions.

If you are allowed visitors it is important that friends and relatives that are unwell themselves do not visit. Children should also be

discouraged from coming to visit you. If you have any concerns about visitors please discuss this with a member of ward staff.

All visitors should wash their hands with soap and water before and after visiting you and should not eat or drink on the ward. If your visitors are visiting someone else in a different part of the hospital it is important that they visit you last.

What about my personal laundry?

If you are suffering from Norovirus special laundry bags are available from staff for your relatives/carers to place directly in the washing machine at home.

Can I develop Norovirus again?

Yes. Immunity is not long lasting and you could be affected in the future.

Can I go home if I have Norovirus?

As soon as the doctor thinks you are well enough you can go home. If you are going to a residential or nursing home, you will need to wait for at least 48 hours after your symptoms have stopped. If you are readmitted to hospital for any reason within 48 hours, please inform staff that you have recently had Norovirus.

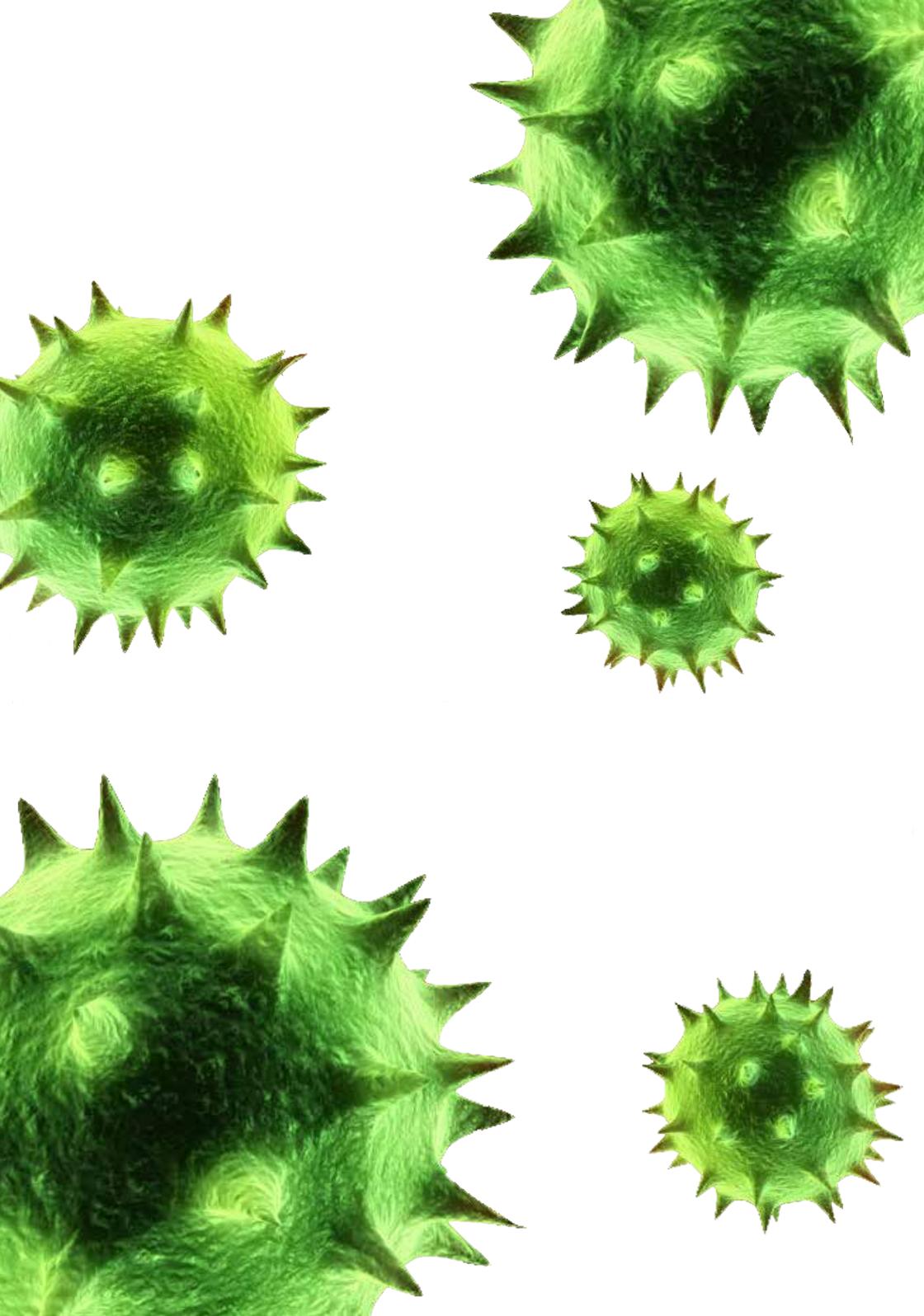
Who can I speak to if I have further questions?

Please speak to any of the staff who are caring for you.

If the staff are unable to answer your questions or, if you require further information, please ask a member of staff to contact the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse Team on your behalf.

Further information on Norovirus is also available via the Public Health England website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on compact disk and in other languages on request. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

Telephone: 01244 366066

or email: cochpals@nhs.net

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若是你想索取這份傳單的中文譯本，請聯絡「病人預約中心」或向其中一名職員查詢。

Si vous voulez cette brochure en français, contactez le bureau des rendez-vous ou demandez à un membre du personnel.

यदि आप यह पत्रिका हिन्दी में लेना चाहते हैं तो कृपया रजिस्ट्रार ऑफ़ इन्फॉर्मेशन सेंटर से संपर्क करें या किसी स्टाफ से पूछें।

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WZZ5322nNov17pi

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Produced by Medical Photography and Illustration, COCH