

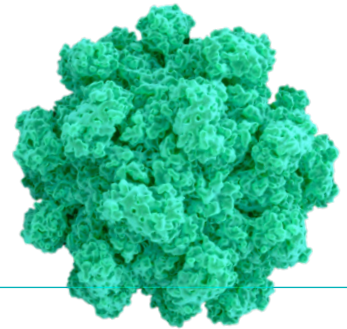
Guidelines for the management of norovirus outbreaks

In acute and community health and social care settings.



Overarching recommendations

- During norovirus outbreaks, undertake continuous risk assessment to establish which control measures are needed.
- Provide staff with sufficient information and training so they can quickly act when a norovirus outbreak occurs.



Patient testing

- If possible, test all symptomatic patients at admission or when they develop symptoms.
- Use PCR for testing – other methods are not sensitive enough to ensure the absence of norovirus.
- Use faeces for testing – other specimens are not sensitive enough to ensure the absence of norovirus.
- No need to retest, unless the patient is at high risk of chronic infection.

Outbreak prevention

- Consider changes to building design.
- Prepare staff for potential norovirus outbreaks (e.g. during norovirus season).
- Avoid admitting anyone who is known or suspected to be infected with norovirus.
- Avoid using soft furnishings and non-wipeable items.
- Consider participating in a norovirus prevention surveillance programme.

Outbreak control

- Undertake surveillance for new cases and symptoms.
- Hand hygiene: appropriate handwashing with soap and water is superior to other methods.
- PPE: gloves and aprons when caring for symptomatic patients; masks for clearing vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Cleaning: higher frequency and terminal cleaning, ensure organic soiling is removed before disinfection.
- Disinfection: any suitable surfaces with 1000 ppm sodium hypochlorite,
- Cleaning equipment: do not reuse unless appropriately decontaminated.
- Risk-assess whether unit/facility closures, or staff/visitor restrictions, are needed and feasible.
- No need to sample the environment routinely.
- Offer food and drink that is covered or individually wrapped; remove anything that becomes contaminated.
- If possible, exclude staff from work and do not let them return until 48 hours after symptoms disappear.
- Avoid transfers to other units.
- If possible, maintain control measures for 72 hours after the last symptoms in the last case disappear to prevent recurrence.
- Treatment/symptom control: treat secondary conditions if needed (e.g. dehydration); current evidence does not suggest that any methods are effective in treating/improving norovirus infection or its symptoms.

Prevention of spread to other facilities

- Inform local facilities that you are experiencing an outbreak.
- Avoid transfers/discharges to other facilities.



Scan here for full guidance

