



# Be Ready for Norovirus Season

Quick Guide

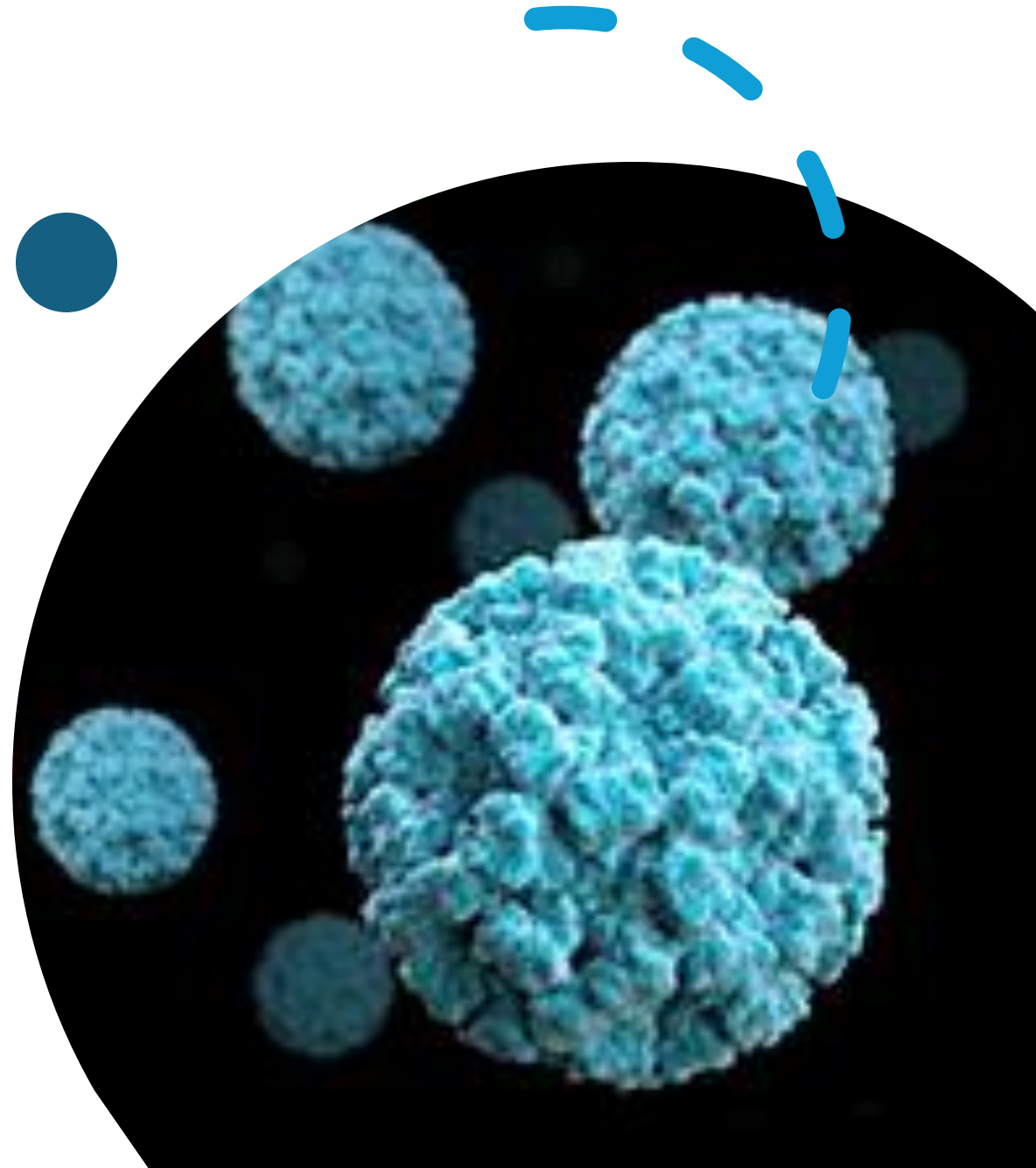
ICNC meeting 11.26.25

# What is Norovirus & Why It's Especially Important in the LTC Setting

- Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that can cause the sudden onset of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Norovirus infection is often called by other names such as stomach flu, stomach bug, food poisoning or viral gastroenteritis. Norovirus is the leading cause of acute gastroenteritis outbreaks in the U.S. — characterized by vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, sometimes fever and fatigue.
- The peak season is roughly November through April.
- Norovirus infection is predictable in that there is not a lot of variation in symptoms and duration from person to person. The average person will get norovirus five times in their life
- Outbreaks happen often and can be more severe among residents. . Between 2011 and 2021, over 22,000 norovirus outbreaks were reported to the CDC's National Outbreak Reporting System, of those outbreaks 58% were in healthcare settings, primarily in LTC facilities.
- In the U.S., norovirus is responsible for 19–21 million cases of gastroenteritis each year. This results in 109,000 hospitalizations and 900 deaths annually.

# About the Pathogen

- Infectious Dose- it takes fewer than 100 viral particles to infect someone
- Incubation period- 12-48 hours
- Period of Communicability- onset of symptoms up to 2 weeks or more after recovery
- Signs and Symptoms- Nausea and vomiting Diarrhea Stomach Pain Fever Headache Body aches
- Duration of Illness- 1-3 Days
- Severity of Illness- can cause dehydration which may result in serious problems including hospitalization , infection rarely leads to death.
- Modes of Transmission- Contact- Direct person to person contact or indirectly through contaminated food or water via the fecal–oral route. Norovirus also is spread through contaminated surfaces or objects and aerosols of vomitus.
- Survival- Days to weeks
- Immunization/Prophylaxis/Treatment-Illness is self-limited with symptoms resolving after a few days. There is no specific medicine for norovirus and treatment is supportive (e.g., hydration). Antibiotics will not help treat norovirus infections because they fight bacteria, not viruses.



## Key facts for your team:

- Very low infectious dose (means it takes very few viral particles to infect someone).
- It spreads easily: person-to-person (especially direct contact or shared surfaces), contaminated food or surfaces, and via vomiting events.
- Residents are more vulnerable to complications (e.g., dehydration, hospital transfer) given age, comorbidities, and communal living.

# What to Look For — Early Warning Signs for Staff

Educate all staff so they recognize when norovirus may be a concern.

Key things to monitor:

- **Symptoms in residents or staff:** sudden onset of vomiting and/or watery diarrhea, sometimes stomach cramps, possible low-grade fever.
- **Multiple cases:** If more than one resident (or staff) around the same time and place have similar GI symptoms, suspect an outbreak. The CDC defines an outbreak as two or more similar illnesses from a common exposure.
- **Rapid spread:** If symptoms are moving across rooms/units, or multiple residents/staff in a cluster.
- **Environmental cues:** Vomit or diarrheal events, especially shared areas (dining rooms, communal bathrooms, activity areas). Viral shedding can be high after symptom onset.
- **Seasonality:** As noted, higher risk in winter months — staff should be extra vigilant during that time period.
- **Staff illness:** Staff who become ill (vomiting/diarrhea) can introduce or propagate infection; they may also contaminate food/service areas.

# Being Proactive — Prevention Strategies

Hand Hygiene & PPE

Environmental  
Cleaning &  
Disinfection

Resident & Staff  
Placement/Movement

Food/Service Areas

Hydration & Resident  
Monitoring

Staff Education & Sick  
Leave Policy

Early Detection &  
Surveillance

# If You Suspect Someone Has Norovirus — Step-by-Step for Staff

- **Isolate the resident:**
- **In addition to Standard precautions, apply Contact Enteric Precautions.**
- **Hand hygiene:**
- **Clean and disinfect:**
- **Suspend or limit communal activities:**
- **Monitor for spread:** Track additional residents or staff with similar symptoms. Start a line-list.
- **Notify leadership & infection prevention/staff/residents/families/health department.**
- **Support resident care:** Ensure hydration, nutritional support, symptom management (vomiting/diarrhea).
- **Return to work/resident precaution criteria:**

# IT HAPPENS

**Norovirus doesn't have to.**  
Norovirus can be spread by people who  
didn't wash their hands.

**Don't be one of them.**

**WASH YOUR HANDS.**



[cdc.gov/norovirus](https://cdc.gov/norovirus)

## ARE YOU SITTING DOWN FOR THIS?



**Most norovirus is spread by people who didn't wash  
their hands after going to the bathroom.**



**WASH YOUR HANDS.**

[cdc.gov/norovirus](https://cdc.gov/norovirus)



## HERE'S THE REAL POOP:

Most norovirus is spread by people  
who didn't wash their hands.

Norovirus is a very contagious virus  
that can cause vomiting and diarrhea.

Anyone can get infected and sick with norovirus.

**WASH YOUR HANDS.**

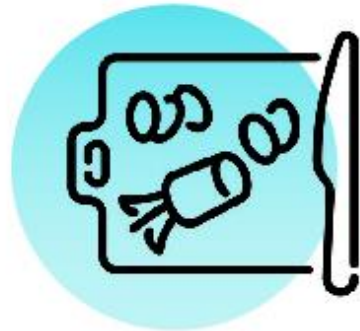


[cdc.gov/norovirus](https://cdc.gov/norovirus)

# WASH YOUR HANDS WELL TO PREVENT NOROVIRUS.

**WASH with SOAP AND WATER for  
at least 20 SECONDS, especially:**

**BEFORE**  
eating,  
preparing, or  
handling food.



**AFTER**  
using the toilet or  
changing diapers.

**BEFORE**  
giving yourself  
or someone  
else medicine.



# Cleaning and Disinfection

EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective Against Norovirus (feline calicivirus) [List G] | US EPA



## How to Read a Disinfectant Label

**Read the entire label.**  
**The label is the law!**

Note: Below is an **example** of information that can be found on a disinfectant label

**Active Ingredients:**  
What are the main disinfecting chemicals?

**EPA Registration Number:**  
U.S. laws require that all disinfectants be registered with EPA.

**Directions for Use (Instructions for Use):**  
Where should the disinfectant be used?  
What germs does the disinfectant kill?  
What types of surfaces can the disinfectant be used on?  
How do I properly use the disinfectant?

**Contact Time:**  
How long does the surface have to stay wet with the disinfectant to kill germs?

**ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:**  
Alkyl (60% C14, 30% C16, 5% C12, 5% C18)  
Dimethyl Benzyl Ammonium Chloride .....10.0%  
**OTHER INGREDIENTS:** .....90.0%  
**TOTAL:** .....100.0%

EPA REG NO. 55555-55-55555

**CAUTION**

**Directions for Use**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:**  
It is a violation of Federal law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling.

**For Disinfection of Healthcare Organisms:**  
Staphylococcus aureus,  
Pseudomonas aeruginosa.

**To Disinfect Hard, Nonporous Surfaces:**  
Pre-wash surface.  
Mop or wipe with disinfectant solution.  
Allow solution to stay wet on surface for at least 10 minutes.  
Rinse well and air dry.

**PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS:**  
Hazardous to humans and domestic animals. Wear gloves and eye protection.  
**CAUSES MODERATE EYE IRRITATION.** Avoid contact with eyes, skin or clothing. Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling. Avoid contact with foods.  
**FIRST AID: IF IN EYES:** Hold eye open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15-20 minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing eye.  
**IF ON SKIN OR CLOTHING:** Take off contaminated clothing. Rinse skin immediately with plenty of water for 15-20 minutes.  
**POISON CONTROL:** Call a Poison Control Center (1-866-366-5048) or doctor for treatment advice.  
**STORAGE AND DISPOSAL:** Store this product in a cool, dry area away from direct sunlight and heat. When not in use keep center cap of lid closed to prevent moisture loss. Nonrefillable container. Do not reuse or refill this container.

**Signal Words (Caution, Warning, Danger):**  
How risky is this disinfectant if it is swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin?

**Precautionary Statements:**  
How do I use this disinfectant safely? Do I need PPE?

**First Aid:**  
What should I do if I get the disinfectant in my eyes or mouth, on my skin, or if I breathe it in?

**Storage & Disposal:**  
How should the disinfectant be stored? How should I dispose of expired disinfectant? What should I do with the container?

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

PROJECT FIRSTLINE

EPA  
United States Environmental Protection Agency

WWW.CDC.GOV/PROJECTFIRSTLINE

# Links and References



[Training and Educational Materials | Project Firstline | CDC](#)



[How to Prevent Norovirus | Norovirus | CDC](#)



[Germs live in “the gut”](#)



[Diarrhea Micro-Learn | Project Firstline | CDC](#)