

# Norovirus

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School Name  
School Nurse Name  
Phone Number  
Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that there has been an increase in the number of students at school reporting gastrointestinal symptoms including vomiting and diarrhea. We have been in contact with the public health department and are taking all appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of our school community. A common cause of gastrointestinal outbreaks is norovirus. The following information is intended to help you understand more about norovirus and how to prevent further spread.

**What is norovirus?** Norovirus is an extremely contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. It is also often referred to as the “stomach flu” or “stomach bug”. It is important to note that it is not related to the influenza virus that causes the flu. There are many different types of noroviruses which means you can get it more than once throughout your life.

**What are the symptoms?** Norovirus causes swelling in the stomach and intestines, known as acute gastroenteritis. Common symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and stomach pain. Additionally, headache, fever, and body aches can also occur. Symptoms typically develop 12-48 hours after exposure and can be severe, causing many episodes of diarrhea and vomiting.

**How is it treated?** There is no specific treatment and no vaccine for norovirus. The most important thing to do is to drink plenty of fluids to replace the liquid lost due to vomiting and diarrhea. With appropriate rest and hydration, most people feel better after 1–3 days.

**What are the risks?** Dehydration is the biggest risk associated with norovirus. Signs of dehydration include dry mouth and throat, decrease in urination,

dizziness, and increased fussiness. If dehydration is suspected, prompt evaluation by their healthcare provider is required as treatment with IV fluids and other medical care may be necessary.

**How does it spread?** Norovirus spreads very easily and quickly from person to person, as a person with norovirus sheds billions of microscopic, infectious particles. It can also spread through contaminated food.

**How long should children with norovirus stay away from school?** Children with norovirus can return to school 24 hours after the vomiting and diarrhea have stopped, they feel well enough to do so, and meet all other exclusion criteria.

**What should you do now?** Monitor your child for symptoms of norovirus and notify your child’s pediatrician and school nurse if, at any time, you suspect your child may be infected. To help prevent spread:

- Practice good hygiene
- Avoid sharing food or drinks
- Don’t prepare food if you have vomiting or diarrhea
- Clean and disinfect surfaces
- Immediately remove and wash clothing that may be contaminated

Thank you for your careful attention to the information in this notice and for your diligence in helping to keep our school community as safe and healthy as possible. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the school nurse with any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

School Nurse Name