

Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency
Lancaster County Health Advisory Council
Important Information Regarding Norovirus
1/2/2025

What it is...

A virus in the *Caliciviridae* family causes norovirus. This virus, when it enters your body, makes your stomach and intestines swell or become inflamed. This is a condition called *gastroenteritis*, which leads to symptoms of norovirus.

What it does...

Norovirus is a common and very contagious virus that causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms may be similar to the stomach flu, but they are not caused by the same virus. Norovirus is easily transmitted through close contact with an infected person or through contaminated food or surfaces. There is no vaccine for Norovirus but it typically lasts less than 3 days. Norovirus is usually seasonal with the most outbreaks in the US occurring between November and April.

What to expect...

Symptoms usually appear 12-48 hours after exposure and may include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain

It is most common for symptoms to last 1-3 days. Additionally, you may also experience headache, fever or body aches.

What to do...

Seek medical attention if you develop diarrhea that doesn't go away within several days. Also call your health care provider if you experience severe vomiting, bloody stools, stomach pain or dehydration. To prevent norovirus infection:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the toilet or changing a diaper and before you prepare food and eat or drink. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers aren't as effective against noroviruses as using soap and water.
- Avoid contaminated food and water, including food that could have been prepared by someone who was sick.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Cook seafood thoroughly.

- Disinfect surfaces that might have been contaminated. Wear gloves and use a chlorine bleach solution or a disinfectant that is effective against noroviruses.
- Use caution when traveling. If you're traveling to areas with a high risk of norovirus infection, consider eating only cooked foods, drinking only hot or carbonated beverages, and avoiding food sold by street vendors.

Resources:

[Norovirus: Symptoms, Causes & Treatment \(clevelandclinic.org\)](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17266-norovirus)

[Norovirus infection - Symptoms & causes - Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/norovirus/symptoms-causes/slc-20074997)