

## Information for Schools and Child Care Providers

Norovirus is the most common cause of viral gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines). It is often incorrectly called the "stomach flu," although the influenza virus does not cause it.

**CAUSE** Norovirus (previously known as calicivirus, Norwalk virus, or Norwalk-like virus).

**SYMPTOMS** Vomiting is the most prominent symptom, as well as watery diarrhea. Low-grade fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and stomach cramps can also occur. The illness is mild to moderately severe. Symptoms usually last 1 to 3 days.

**SPREAD** Norovirus leaves the body through the stool or vomit of an infected person and enters another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with the virus are placed in the mouth. Norovirus particles are extremely small and billions of them are in the stool and vomit of infected people. Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or if an individual vomits at school and prompt cleanup does not occur. People can also get sick by eating food items contaminated during preparation or serving.

**INCUBATION** Typically, it takes 12 to 48 hours after a person is exposed to norovirus for symptoms to appear.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD** People are most contagious while symptoms are present and for days after vomiting and/or diarrhea have stopped.

**EXCLUSION** Exclude children and youth from childcare and school while ill and until at least 48 hours after vomiting and/or diarrhea have stopped.

**DIAGNOSIS/TREATMENT** Questions related to symptoms, diagnosis and treatment should be directed to individuals' primary care provider or clinic. There is no specific treatment for norovirus.