



PULL TOGETHER TO PREVENT INFECTION



**Worcestershire
Acute Hospitals**
NHS Trust

(Insert today's date)

Dear Colleague,

(Insert Patients Name) has been discharged from (insert ward, hospital site) on (insert date) which is affected by viral gastro-enteritis. (please tick relevant statement on discharge from healthcare setting)

	They have been affected and are now in excess of 48 hours symptom free
	They have been in a closed area but as yet have not been symptomatic (must be located in a single room with full ensuite or dedicated toileting facilities)
	They are still presenting with symptoms (must not be discharged to a residential care facility)
	They are not yet 48 hours symptom free (must not be discharged to a residential care facility)

ACTIONS

- Hand washing is the single most important measure in preventing infection. Carers must wash their hands after handling resident's, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, their bedding, clothing or equipment.
- Remind staff and visitors to wash their hands before leaving the residents room.
- Provide facilities for residents to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.
- Carers should wear gloves and disposable plastic aprons to toilet or clean up residents who have soiled themselves, when disposing of excreta, or when handling soiled linen and clothes: wash hands after removing gloves.
- Stool samples must be obtained from a resident with diarrhoea.
- If staff members become symptomatic, they must be sent off duty and specimens should be obtained. They do not return to work until they have been without symptoms for 48 hours.
- If you are concerned about symptoms in this resident or others contact their general practitioner for advice.
- Residents presenting with symptoms or who are not 48 hours symptom free must be cared for in their own rooms. Ensure they have separate toilet facilities e.g. toilet or commode with access to hand washing facilities. If they are in shared accommodation in your home, seek advice from the Health Protection Unit about grouping.

If other residents / staff develop symptoms in a short period of time, notify PHE (Public Health) on 03442253560 and select option 2.

Further advice regarding management / infection control procedures can be found at <https://www.worcestershirehealth.nhs.uk/infection-control-service/nursing-care-homes/norovirus-influenza/> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norovirus-managing-outbreaks-in-acute-and-community-health-and-social-care-settings> or visit www.gov.uk and search for Norovirus guidelines.

KEY POINTS

Viral gastro-enteritis causes diarrhoea and vomiting most commonly in the community, generally it is a mild illness. The elderly population are one of the most vulnerable, along with healthcare staff.

What is the norovirus?

Noroviruses are one of the most common causes of viral gastro-enteritis/stomach upsets. The incubation period (time from contact to symptom onset) is usually between 12-48 hours, with the illness lasting between 1-3 days.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea, headache, pyrexia, myalgia (muscle pain), and abdominal pain.

How is viral gastro-enteritis treated?

There is no specific treatment for viral gastro-enteritis apart from letting it run its course and encouraging fluids. There are no long-term effects from viral gastro-enteritis however the elderly and very young are at risk from dehydration.

How is it spread?

The virus is easily transmitted from one person to another. It can be transmitted by contact with another infected person, or by eating contaminated food or water.

How can cases or outbreaks be stopped?

Outbreaks can be difficult to control and long-lasting because norovirus is easily transmitted from one person to another and the virus can survive in the environment. The most effective way to respond to a case or group of cases is to disinfect contaminated areas, to institute good hygiene measures including hand washing and to provide advice on food handling.

SIGNED: (Nurse completing form):

PRINT NAME:

DESIGNATION:

Send one copy with the patient and file a second copy in the medical records.