



Headquarters British Forces Germany Health Service

British Forces Health Complex
British Forces Post Office 40

Telephone **0049 (0)2161 908 2026** Military **94867 2026**
Fax **0049 (0)2161 908 2420** Fax **94867 2420**

E-Mail Christine.moses245@mod.uk



Reference: HQ/HS/3070

Date: Released 26 March 2010

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF NOROVIRUS INFECTION

Norovirus, sometimes called 'winter vomiting disease' is a very common cause of gastroenteritis (upset stomach).

Symptoms of a norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and, in some cases, a fever, headache, stomach cramps and aching limbs. Symptoms normally last 12-60 hours but most people make a full recovery within two to three days.

The norovirus spreads very easily from person to person and can survive for several days in a contaminated area. Noroviruses can be spread through contact with an infected person, through contact with surfaces or objects that are contaminated with the virus, or by eating contaminated food or water.

Lt Col Peter Hennessy, SO1 Health says: "Norovirus infections occur in people of all ages and outbreaks of the illness are common, particularly within contained environments such as schools. Our advice is that any child or teacher with diarrhoea or vomiting should be excluded from school until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. Exclusion from swimming should be for at least 2 weeks following the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting."

Preventing the spread of Norovirus infections

Although it is not always possible to prevent getting a norovirus, good hygiene can help to limit the spread of the infection. You can take the following steps to help stop the virus spreading:

- **Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly**, particularly after using the toilet, and before preparing food.
- **Disinfect any surfaces or objects that could be contaminated with a norovirus.** It is best to use a bleach-based household cleaner. Always follow the instructions on the cleaning product.
- **Avoid eating raw, unwashed produce**, and only eat oysters from a reliable source, because they have been known to carry the norovirus.

- **Flush away any infected faeces or vomit** in the toilet. You should also keep the surrounding toilet area clean and hygienic.
- **Wash any clothing, or linens, which could have become contaminated with norovirus.** Washing with hot, soapy water will help to ensure that the virus is killed.

If you are suffering from a norovirus infection

There is no specific treatment for a norovirus infection and people will usually not need to visit a doctor, unless medical attention for another condition is required. Instead, Lt Col Hennessy recommends to:

- stay at home,
- take paracetamol to relieve symptoms of any fever, and
- drink plenty of water to replace the fluids lost through diarrhoea and vomiting, to prevent dehydration.