

Norovirus

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus refers to a group of viruses that cause “stomach flu” or gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-I-tis). “Stomach flu” is **not** related to “the flu,” which is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Norovirus is very contagious, and can be spread easily from person to person.

Symptoms of norovirus:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Stomach cramping

Sometimes people also have:

- A low-grade fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Muscle aches

Inside this Health Bulletin:

- Norovirus
- Pertussis
- Tips for staying warm
- Drunk driving prevention



In general, children experience more vomiting than adults. In most people, symptoms last about 1 or 2 days.

How is norovirus spread?

Norovirus is found in the stool or vomit of infected people. You can become infected with norovirus in the following ways:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that have norovirus germs
- Touching objects with norovirus on them and then touching your mouth
- Having direct contact with someone who is infected (for example, sharing food or eating utensils with someone who is sick)



Tips to prevent norovirus

You can limit your chance of getting norovirus by following these steps:

- Wash your hands often— especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Carefully clean contaminated surfaces using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables.
- Wash clothing, bedding and rags that might have virus on it with soap and hot water.
- Flush any stool or vomit in the toilet and make sure the area is kept clean.

If you have norovirus, you should stay home and drink plenty of fluids.

Stay in Touch with the Health Bulletin

You can find the Health Bulletin in many languages at http://www.phila.gov/Health/units/ddc/Health_Bulletin/The_Health_Bulletin.html. Is there a health topic you would like to know more about? Please let us know. For more information about the Health Bulletin, contact PDPH at HealthBulletin@phila.gov.

Pertussis

Pertussis, or **whooping cough**, is an upper respiratory infection caused by a type of bacteria. It can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage and even death. The bacteria are passed in tiny droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person with pertussis can pass the disease to other people by coughing or sneezing around them. It is very contagious.

Pertussis causes uncontrollable coughing that can make it hard to breathe. A "whooping" sound is heard when the person tries to take a breath. The infection usually lasts 6 weeks.

There are vaccines, or shots, that can help protect you from pertussis. The **DTaP** vaccine is for infants and children under 7 years of age, and the **Tdap** vaccine is for older children and adults. These vaccines will protect you against **tetanus** (lockjaw), **diphtheria** and **pertussis**. Make sure that your family is up-to-date with their pertussis vaccines.

Symptoms of pertussis:

- Runny nose
- Slight fever (102 °F or lower)
- Severe repeated coughs that:
 - Make it hard to breathe
 - Can be followed by vomiting
 - May be followed by a "whooping" sound when a person inhales
- Diarrhea
- Choking spells in infants

When to contact a doctor:

Call your healthcare provider if you or your child develop the symptoms of pertussis.

Call 911 or get to an emergency room if the ill person has any of these symptoms:

- Bluish skin color
- Periods of stopped breathing (apnea)
- Seizures or convulsions
- High fever
- Persistent vomiting
- Dehydration

The flu and pertussis are both spread by coughing and sneezing, and can cause problems in children and adults. You can prevent both of them with vaccines.

Stay Warm and Healthy in Winter

The winter season can be harsh for seniors. Take the following tips to stay warm this winter:

- Stay dry indoors and outdoors
- Limit your exposure to snow, wind, rain and water or dampness
- Dress warmly
- Keep your skin and clothing dry to prevent frostbite
- Eat nutritious meals, especially a hot meal
- Drink a lot of fluids



Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

December is **National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month**. Take steps during the holidays and throughout the year to make sure you and your loved ones avoid driving drunk.

These tips can help you stay safe:

- Decide on a designated driver if your group is driving to a place where people will be drinking
- Be a helpful host; take the car keys away if someone has been drinking

