

Press Release

11 December 2019

Worcestershire health bosses are calling on the public to heed advice and stay at home if they have norovirus to avoid passing it on.

Worcestershire health bosses are concerned about the spread of the winter vomiting bug this year and the impact it is having on health services.

Worcestershire residents are therefore being advised, if you catch the virus not to go back to work or school until at least 48 hours after symptoms pass, to avoid passing it on to others.

The latest data from Public Health England (PHE) surveillance showed that the number of positive norovirus laboratory reports during two weeks in the middle of November (11th-24th) was 28% higher than the average for the last five years.

Health bosses are also encouraging those who need it to seek help from the free, 24/7 NHS 111 phone and online service rather than going to hospital or their GP, where they risk infecting others.

Dr Carl Ellson, Strategic Clinical Lead for the three Worcestershire CCGs said, “We’ve already seen a number of Worcestershire care homes and schools affected by norovirus, and unfortunately instances like these are likely to rise over the coming weeks.

“It’s a really unpleasant illness to catch, but for the vast majority of people it will usually pass in a couple of days, and self-treating at home is the best way to help yourself and avoid putting others at risk.

“Crucially, if you’re experiencing norovirus symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting it’s important that you don’t return to work or school for 48 hours after the symptoms resolve – and avoid visiting elderly or ill friends and relatives – to avoid spreading it to other people.”

Norovirus is one of the most common stomach bugs in the UK. It’s also called the winter vomiting bug because it’s more common in winter, although it can be caught at any time of the year.

Infections rarely require medical treatment and most people will recover from it within a few days. It is, however, highly contagious, and is easily passed on at home, at hospital, or in the local community, and those who have been infected remain carriers for some time.

It is therefore important that those who have experienced symptoms or have been in contact with friends or family who have recently had norovirus, limit their contact with young children, elderly friends and relatives or those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Those who are experiencing severe symptoms or are worried about their children can seek guidance on what to do on the [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) website, or by using the free NHS 111 phone or [online service](#).

Five ways to limit the spread of norovirus:

Sent on behalf of:

NHS Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG, NHS South Worcestershire CCG and NHS Wyre Forest CCG

1. Stay at home if you are experiencing norovirus symptoms. Do not return to work or send children to school until 48 hours after symptoms have cleared. Also avoid visiting elderly or poorly relatives, particularly if they are in hospital.
2. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Alcohol hand gels don't kill norovirus.
3. Use a bleach-based household cleaner or a combination of bleach and hot water to disinfect household surfaces and commonly used objects such as toilets, taps, telephones, door handles and kitchen surfaces.
4. If you are ill, avoid cooking and helping prepare meals for others.
5. Wash any contaminated clothing or bedding using detergent and at 60°C, and if possible wear disposable gloves to handle contaminated items.

How to spot the signs of norovirus:

The main symptoms of norovirus are typically:

- suddenly feeling sick
- projectile vomiting
- watery diarrhoea

Some people also have a slight fever, headaches, painful stomach cramps and aching limbs.

The symptoms appear one to two days after people become infected and typically last for up to two or three days.

How to look after yourself if you have D&V:

Most people will make a full recovery within 1-2 days, but it is important to drink plenty of fluids during that time to prevent dehydration especially in the very young, elderly or those with weakened immunity.

Do:

- stay at home and get plenty of rest
- drink lots of fluids, such as water or squash – take small sips if you feel sick
- carry on breast or bottle feeding your baby – if they're being sick, try giving small feeds more often than usual
- give babies on formula or solid foods small sips of water between feeds
- eat when you feel able to – you don't need to eat or avoid any specific foods
- take paracetamol if you're in discomfort – check the leaflet before giving it to your child

Don't:

- go back to work, or send your children back to school, until 48 hours after symptoms have cleared
- have fruit juice or fizzy drinks – they can make diarrhoea worse
- make baby formula weaker – use it at its usual strength
- give children under 12 medicine to stop diarrhoea
- give aspirin to children under 16

Notes to editors:

- For more information about NHS Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG Clinical Commissioning Group please visit: www.redditchandbromsgroveccg.nhs.uk

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- For more information about NHS South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group please visit: www.southworcscg.nhs.uk
- For more information about NHS Wyre Forest Clinical Commissioning Group please visit: www.wyreforestccg.nhs.uk

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