



ISOLATION

Place patients on Contact Precautions in a single occupancy room and separate bathroom if they have symptoms consistent with norovirus gastroenteritis.

Consider minimizing patient movements within a unit and suspend group activities.

Staff who have recovered from recent suspected norovirus infection associated with an outbreak may be best suited to care for symptomatic patients until the outbreak resolves.



HAND WASHING

Actively promote adherence to hand hygiene among healthcare personnel, patients, and visitors in patient care areas affected by outbreaks of norovirus gastroenteritis.

During outbreaks, use soap and water for hand hygiene after providing care or having contact with patients suspected or confirmed with norovirus gastroenteritis. Alcohol-based sanitizers are not effective.



CLOSURE

Consider the closure of wards to new admissions or transfers. Implement systems to designate patients with symptomatic norovirus and to notify receiving healthcare facilities or personnel prior to transfer of such patients within or between facilities.

Remove all shared or communal food items for patients or staff from clinical areas for the duration of the outbreak.



DIAGNOSTICS

Consider the development and adoption of facility policies to enable rapid clinical and virological confirmation of suspected cases of symptomatic norovirus infection while implementing prompt control measures.

Consider submitting stool specimens as early as possible during a suspected norovirus gastroenteritis outbreak.



PPE

If norovirus infection is suspected, adherence to PPE use according to Contact and Standard Precautions is recommended for individuals entering the patient care area (i.e., gowns, gloves and mask upon entry) to reduce the likelihood of exposure to infectious vomitus or fecal material.



VISITORS

Establish visitor policies for acute gastroenteritis (e.g., norovirus) outbreaks. Restrict non-essential visitors from affected areas of the facility during outbreaks of norovirus gastroenteritis.



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EDUCATION

Provide education to staff, patients, and visitors, including recognition of norovirus symptoms, preventing infection, and modes of transmission upon the recognition and throughout the duration of a norovirus gastroenteritis outbreak.



COMMUNICATION

Provide timely communication to personnel and visitors when an outbreak of norovirus gastroenteritis is suspected and outline what policies and provisions need to be followed to prevent further transmission.

Notify local health department of an outbreak at your facility.



STAFF LEAVE

Exclude ill personnel from work for a minimum of 48-72 hours after resolution of symptoms. Once personnel return to work, reinforce importance of frequent hand hygiene, before and after each patient contact.

Ensure that staff provide care for one patient cohort on their ward and do not move between cohorts. Exclude non-essential staff from areas experiencing gastroenteritis.



CASE FINDING

Begin active case-finding when a cluster of acute gastroenteritis cases is detected in the healthcare facility. Start a list that tracks both exposed and symptomatic patients and staff. Collect relevant epidemiological, clinical, and demographic data as well as information on patient location and outcomes. Your local health department can help you with this.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

Perform routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched environmental surfaces and equipment in isolation and cohorted areas, as well as high-traffic clinical areas. Frequently touched surfaces include, but are not limited to, commodes, toilets, faucets, hand/bedrailing, telephones, door handles, computer equipment, and kitchen preparation surfaces. Increase frequency of cleaning during outbreaks. Clean and disinfect shared equipment between patients using EPA-registered products with label claims for use in healthcare. Clean surfaces before applying disinfectant. More at "www.cdc.gov/norovirus/resources"

Use Standard Precautions for handling soiled patient-service items or linens, including the use of appropriate PPE. During outbreaks, change privacy curtains when they are visibly soiled and upon patient discharge or transfer. Handle soiled linens carefully, without agitating them, to avoid dispersal of virus. Use Standard Precautions, including the use of appropriate PPE (e.g., gloves and gowns), to minimize the likelihood of cross-contamination.