

Norovirus

Infection Control information leaflet
for patients and visitors
during a suspected outbreak



WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM?

- ❖ A number of patients and/or staff are suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- ❖ It is suspected that the illness is caused by a virus called Norovirus, previously known as 'Small Round Structured Virus' or 'Winter Vomiting'.
- ❖ This virus is a frequent cause of diarrhoea and vomiting in the community, particularly where people are in close proximity such as in hospitals or nursing/residential homes. It can affect you at any time of year.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT PATIENTS?

- ❖ Norovirus infection typically lasts from 12-72 hours. The most common symptoms are nausea (*feeling sick*), vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhoea.
- ❖ Once the symptoms have settled no further action is necessary and your treatment will continue as before.

TREATMENT

- ❖ If you develop vomiting and/or diarrhoea a stool sample may be sent to the laboratory for testing. We may also move you to a single room or to an area with other patients with the same symptoms.
- ❖ The main treatment is making sure you drink plenty of fluids.

ADVICE FOR VISITORS

- ❖ Do not visit the hospital if you are, or have been suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea in the past 48 hours.
- ❖ The elderly, the young and anyone whose immune system is low should not visit during the outbreak.
- ❖ Keep visiting to a minimum. Only two people should visit at the same time.
- ❖ Do not visit other patients in the ward or hospital during the outbreak.
- ❖ Do not eat or drink whilst visiting.
- ❖ Do not sit on hospital beds.
- ❖ Do not use the patient toilets.
- ❖ Advise your relative to keep uncovered food, for example fruit, within their locker to avoid contamination.

It is important that you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after visiting your relative.

Specific information leaflets are provided for patients and visitors if vomiting and/or diarrhoea is caused by gastro-intestinal infections other than norovirus.

For further information contact the nurse in charge of the ward.

**Infection Control
Contact Numbers**

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