

Gastrointestinal Illness (including Norovirus)



Cause



- caused by a variety of pathogens, including norovirus
- transmitted by direct or indirect ingestion of infectious feces or ingestion of contaminated food or water
- may be transmitted by airborne route in some instances of norovirus outbreaks
- is highly contagious

Symptoms



- abdominal cramping
- diarrhea
- nausea & vomiting
- fever
- malaise

Treatment



Mainly supportive for symptoms:

- drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration
- over the counter medication for particular symptoms, such as nausea
- antibiotics may be needed for certain infections, but not for norovirus

Work Restrictions



- **If symptomatic or infected**, staff must remain out of the workplace for 48 hours following last episode of vomiting and diarrhea, and **contact Occupational Health.**
- **If exposed to intestinal virus/bacteria** (including family members), there are no work restrictions or modification of work practices.

Prevention



- frequent hand washing, especially after using the washroom, before and after food preparation, and after handling soiled linens
- no eating or drinking in patient care areas
- use routine practices when caring for patients, including proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)