

How do you stop the spread of Viral Gastro-enteritis?

Viral Gastro-enteritis is **highly infectious**, so if you or a member of your household has viral gastro-enteritis or any type of diarrhoea or vomiting, be extra careful with hand and general hygiene practices.

- Clean the following after use and at least twice daily with detergent and hot water, followed by a suitable disinfectant or bleach:
 - Toilet Seats
 - Toilet Bowl
 - Flush handles
 - Taps and wash hand basins
- If you use a disinfectant or bleach, ensure it conforms to a British Standard and store it **safely out of the reach of children**.
- Use a separate towel.
- Soiled clothes should be laundered on as hot a wash as possible. Do not overfill your washing machine or it will not clean them properly.
- Keep soiled washing separate from the rest of the washing, and wash them separately. Clean the outer surfaces of the washing machine after loading.

Because it is highly infectious, viral gastro-enteritis can be a particular problem in institutions like schools, care homes and hospitals, so extra care with hand and general hygiene is of particular importance here. **Do not go visiting hospitals or other healthcare establishments** if you are suffering from symptoms of viral gastroenteritis or until you have been completely free from symptoms for 48 hours.

For more information about Viral Gastroenteritis contact:

*The Community Infection Control Nurse at your
local Primary Care Trust (PCT) 01204 462357 / 462356*

or

your local Health Protection Unit 0161 786 6710

or

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics/index.htm>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/northwest/factsheets/V-GASTRO.pdf>

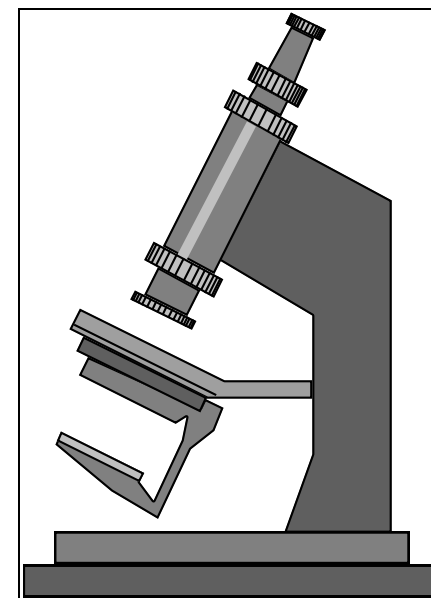
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Viral Gastroenteritis

INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is Viral Gastroenteritis?

It is an illness that is caused by a number of different viruses, most commonly Norovirus, Small Round Structured Virus (SRSV) and Rotavirus.

It can cause:

- Nausea
- Vomiting – which may be projectile
- Diarrhoea - often watery
- Stomach pains and cramps
- Headache
- Fever
- Malaise

These symptoms usually last from between 24 – 48 hours.

How is Viral Gastroenteritis caught?

- From other people who are ill with Viral Gastroenteritis – from contact with their stool or vomit or by breathing in/swallowing the virus in the air after someone has had projectile vomiting.
- From food contaminated by someone who has Viral Gastroenteritis
- From raw or undercooked food, particularly meat and shell fish.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE - but the very young and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

Do you need to stay off work or school?

YES - until you have been completely free from any symptoms (including nausea) for **48 hours** and are feeling quite well.

How do you prevent it?

- By always washing hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:-
 - after going to the toilet;
 - after contact with pets and animals;
 - after changing a baby's nappy
 - before preparing and serving food;
 - before eating food.
- By always practising good food hygiene.
- Avoid contaminating cooked food by allowing contact with raw food and dirty knives or chopping boards etc.
- By thoroughly cooking all food, especially meat and shellfish.

When travelling abroad:

- Drink bottled water
- Avoid ice in your drinks
- Clean your teeth with bottled or treated water
- Ensure all food is thoroughly cooked and kept in hygienic conditions
- Avoid buying food from street vendors
- Avoid fruit unless you can peel it yourself
- Wash salad with bottled water

If you need further advice regarding food hygiene, contact your local Environment Health Officer.