

Illness is usually brief in healthy persons. When people are sick with vomiting and diarrhea, they should drink lots of fluids to prevent dehydration. By drinking juice or water, people can reduce their chance of becoming dehydrated.

Can illness be prevented?

Yes. You can decrease your chance of illness by following these steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water and dry hands with a disposable towel
 - after toilet visits
 - after changing diapers
 - before eating or preparing food
 - after touching animals
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables
- Cook oysters thoroughly before eating them
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner or EPA-registered disinfectant (<http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>)
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap and dry at highest temperature possible)
- Flush or discard any vomit and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean
- Ill persons should not prepare food while they have symptoms and for 2-3 days after symptoms end

Should I work or go to school if I am sick?

- Persons employed in food service or who prepare food for others should not prepare food while they have symptoms and for 2-3 days after they recover from their illness
- Daycare and school-aged children should stay home while they have symptoms
- Healthcare workers should stay home while they have symptoms

Is a vaccine available?

No. There is no vaccine available for norovirus.

Is norovirus common?

Norovirus is common in Maine and in the rest of the country. The federal CDC estimates that 21 million cases of acute gastroenteritis per year are due to norovirus. Because the virus is so common, especially in the winter months, the Maine CDC only investigates outbreaks. Outbreaks in nursing homes, schools and other community settings are not uncommon and occur every year.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821 or visiting www.maine.gov/idepi. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus> - is another excellent source of health information.