



Public Health
England



KENSINGTON
Primary School
Inspiring children for exciting futures

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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Parents and carers of pupils at
Kensington Primary School
Newham
E12 6NN

4 December 2019

Reference Number: 215912

Dear Parent / Carer,

Re: Suspected Norovirus outbreak at Kensington Primary School, Newham

In the last week, there have been a number of children at the school unwell with symptoms of a viral illness. The symptoms the children have are consistent with viral gastroenteritis. Although not confirmed, this is usually caused by Norovirus, a frequent cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the community during the winter.

The most common symptom is vomiting. Diarrhoea tends to be short-lived and less severe than with other causes of gastroenteritis. Other symptoms include nausea, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, chills and fever. The illness is usually mild in nature and gets better without antibiotics, which are not appropriate for viral illnesses. Symptoms usually last between one and three days.

Norovirus is infectious and is easily spread from person to person by the faecal-oral route and by vomiting, environmental contamination and subsequent indirect person to person spread.

Exclusion: an affected child or member of staff is advised to stay away from school until 48 hours after the vomiting and/or diarrhoea have stopped. This is an important measure that we have asked the school/nursery to adopt in order to limit the spread of this infection to others.

We would like to emphasise the need for good hand hygiene and the supervision of this in younger children. Hands should be washed with soap and water after contact with an affected person or environment.

We have attached a factsheet on Norovirus. Please follow the information on this leaflet on hand washing, disinfection and good personal hygiene so we can try to minimise the spread of infection.

If you have any queries, please contact the North East and North Central London Health Protection Team on 020 3837 7084 quoting reference number 215912.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellie Maslen', written in a cursive style.

Ellie Maslen
Health Protection
Practitioner



What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a non-bacterial gastroenteritis (stomach bug) which is commonly known as the “winter vomiting virus” as it is frequently present during the winter months. It has relatively mild symptoms, but is highly infectious.

How is infection spread?

The main spread of infection is through contact with contaminated objects, surfaces, and infected people. For example:

- Ineffective hand washing after using the toilet
- Contaminated food and water
- Touching contaminated surfaces such as door handles, telephones etc.
- Insufficient cleaning of toilet seats and changing mats

Infection may also be spread through airborne particles caused by vomiting.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The incubation period is between 12 and 72 hours. Common symptoms include:

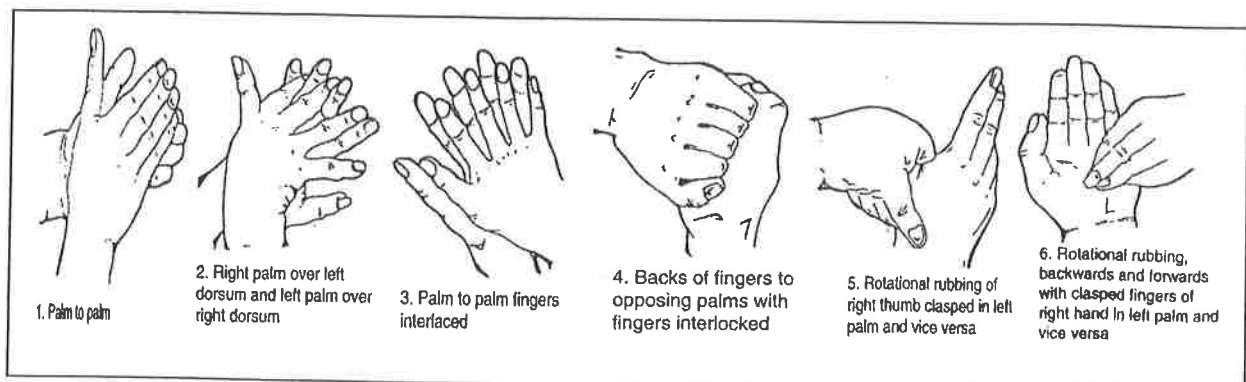
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Abdominal Pain
- Muscle Ache
- Headaches
- Fever

These symptoms usually last between 12-60 hours. Most people make a full recovery within 1-2 days, however some people (particularly the very young or elderly) may become very dehydrated and require hospital treatment.

How to prevent spread of infection?

The infection can be reduced if the following steps are adopted:

- Good hand washing procedures are essential (illustrated in the picture below)
- Thorough and frequent disinfection of surfaces, such as kitchen worktops, toilet seats, toys, and door handles, etc.
- Good personal hygiene.
- Avoid eating any raw or unwashed foodstuffs.





How common is Norovirus

Norovirus is not a notifiable disease so reporting is done on a voluntary basis. Public Health England only receives reports of outbreaks and we see between 130 and 250 outbreaks each year. It is estimated that Norovirus affects between 600,000 and two million people in the UK each year

The virus can easily spread where there are large numbers of people present, or in semi-enclosed environments, examples being schools, residential homes and hospitals.

What to do if infection occurs

Remain at home and reduce your contact with others as much as is possible.

People who have had the infection must stay away from work or school/nursery while they have symptoms, **AND** for a further 48 hours after the last symptoms.

Food preparation should also be avoided until 48 hours after the symptoms have subsided.

Treatments

- There is no specific treatment available; however the illness will usually run its course in 1-2 days.
- Drinking plenty of water helps to avoid diarrhoea related dehydration.
- It may be necessary to provide your doctor with a stool sample for analysis.

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