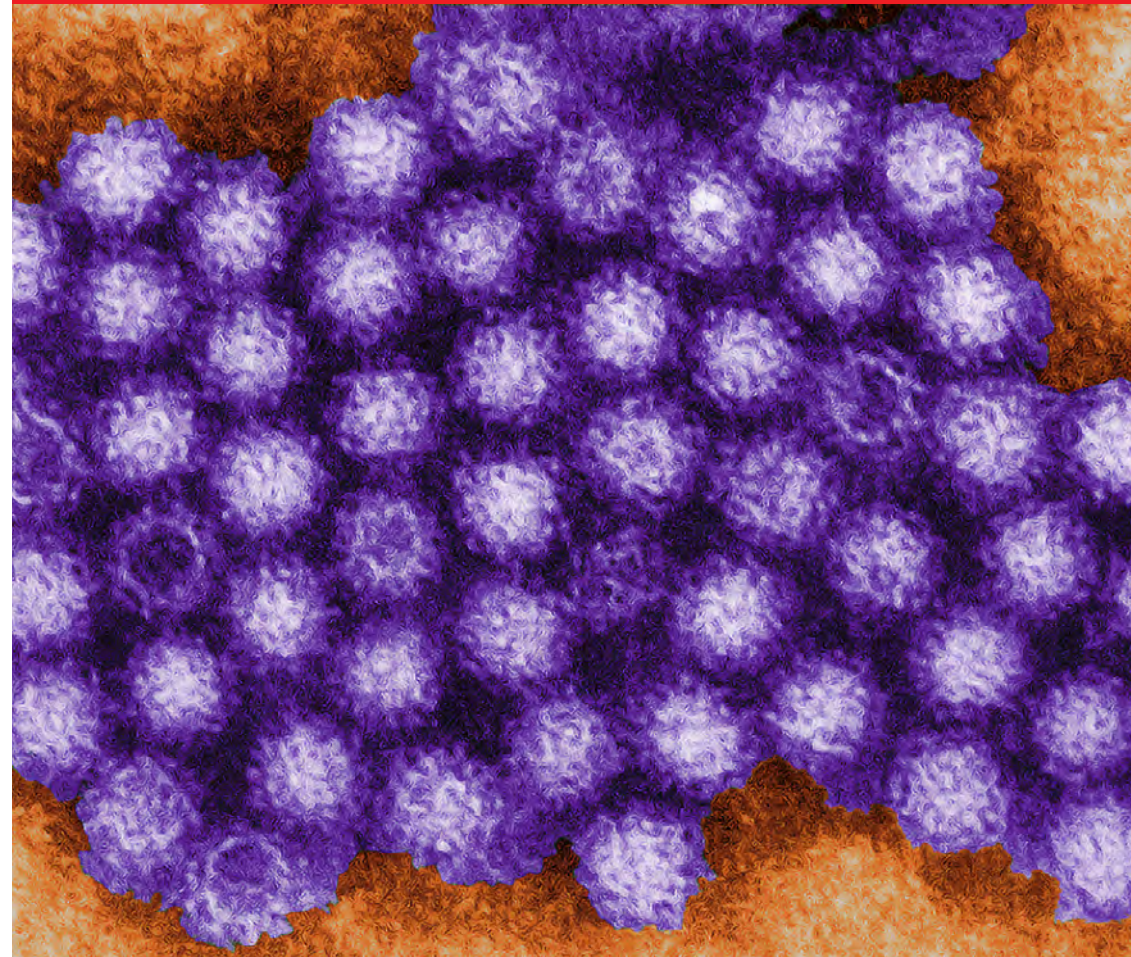


Norovirus

Guidelines for patients and visitors



General information

Noroviruses are found all over the world and are among the most common causes for vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms usually last two to three days and clear up without any lasting effects.

Transmission

Noroviruses are extremely contagious. They can survive in the environment for long periods, for example, on surfaces and objects. They are usually transmitted by way of hands or contact with feces and vomit. Due to the high rate of infection, hospitals and community facilities such as schools, kindergartens, etc. experience epidemics of diarrhea and vomiting each year.

Treatment

There are currently no medications or vaccines for noroviruses. Patients who have experienced extreme dehydration and are unable to drink themselves or keep down fluids may be treated with infusions to replace the fluids.

To prevent transmission, special isolation measures* are taken when treating patients in hospitals. (*single room, special protective clothing such as apron, gloves, surgical mask)

These measures considerably reduce the possibility of transmission.

Measures taken at University Hospital Basel

The following isolation procedures are very important:

- Pictorial instructions for entering and leaving the room are posted on the door of the isolation room.
- Each person must put on an apron, gloves and surgical mask when entering the room.
- Careful disinfection of the hands before entering and when leaving the room is of utmost importance. Hand sanitizer is located in each patient room near the door.

Disinfection of hands is the most important procedure.

Visitors

Visitors are to report to the nurses. They will be instructed on the hygiene measures to be taken inside the isolation room. Children under 12 are not permitted to enter the isolation room. For your own safety, you should avoid visits during the acute phase of the illness.

Disinfection of the surrounding area

Patient room and furniture are disinfected daily with disinfectants by the cleaning service.

Patients' personal laundry

Soiled personal laundry is likely infectious and must be transported in sealed plastic bags. The only way to reliably kill noroviruses is with heavy-duty laundry detergent in a 60°C wash cycle.

Measures to take at home while symptoms persist

Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water:

- before and after preparing meals and before eating
- after chores in the home (bedding, laundry)
- after using the toilet

Laundry

The only way to reliably kill noroviruses is with heavy-duty laundry detergent in a 60°C wash cycle. Afflicted persons should use separate hand towels and washcloths that are changed daily.

Dishes

Dishes can be washed as usual or in the dishwasher.

Surfaces

Surfaces and objects that have come into contact with feces or vomit (toilets, door handles, sinks, etc.) are to be cleaned while wearing disposable rubber gloves and using household cleaner. Bleach or 90% alcohol (e.g. methylated spirits) reliably kills noroviruses. (Note: perform spot test on material first.) Use disposable cloths or rags and dispose after cleaning.