**Norovirus Fact Sheet**

**What is Norovirus and what causes it?**

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus. Norovirus illness is often called other names, such as food poisoning or the stomach flu. It causes gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines), which leads to diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain.

**What are the symptoms of norovirus?**

Symptoms of norovirus usually begin 12 to 48 hours after a person has come in contact with the virus, and last for 1 to 3 days. Common symptoms include vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Other symptoms can include a low-grade fever, headache, and body aches.

**How does Norovirus spread?**

Norovirus is found in the vomit and feces of infected people. When a sick person vomits, norovirus can spray into the air and settle in nearby surfaces and objects. Unwashed hands can also spread fecal matter and contaminate foods. Typically, a person is contagious as soon as they feel ill, until a few days after they feel better. However, an ill person may be contagious for two weeks or longer after feeling better. People can get norovirus in several ways, including:

* Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus.
* Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth
* Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill)

**How is Norovirus treated?**

There are no specific treatments for norovirus. It cannot be treated with antibiotics because it is not caused by bacteria. Drinking fluids is important to replace fluid lost from vomiting and diarrhea and to prevent dehydration. A person should visit a doctor if they become dehydrated.

**How can you prevent the spread of Norovirus?**

* Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after toilet visits, changing diapers, and before touching food. Of note, hand sanitizers are usually not as effective against norovirus as handwashing with soap and water.
* Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and fully cook oysters and other shellfish before eating. Temperatures above 60ºC /140ºF will kill norovirus.
* When sick with norovirus or any diarrheal illness, do NOT go to school or work, especially if you attend or work in a high-risk setting (such as a hospital, nursing home, school, cruise ship, or food-handling job).
* Do NOT cook, prepare, or serve food, or care for others for at least 2 days after you feel better.
* If you vomit or have diarrhea in a public toilet, such as one in a hospital, school, restaurant, or cruise ship, let the staff know so they can properly clean and disinfect.
* Clean and disinfect areas contaminated by vomiting or diarrhea with a solution of 3/4 cup concentrated bleach (or 1 cup of regular bleach) in 1 gallon of water.