The Norovirus season is upon us with increasing numbers of people reporting symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting. Norovirus is highly infectious and outbreaks are common in semi-closed environments such as hospitals, nursing and residential homes and schools. If you suspect there is an outbreak of Norovirus in your care home, you must contact the Local Health Protection Team on Tel: 0344 225 3546. They can give you advice that will assist you to control the spread of the infection.

What makes you think the symptoms are Norovirus rather than being caused by something else?

The main difference between Norovirus and other conditions that have similar symptoms is the suddenness of the symptoms. People will suddenly vomit or have loose stools when only minutes previously they were fine. Most people will want to go to bed and not eat anything. They may have a slightly raised temperature and generally feel unwell.

What do you need to do?

The symptoms of Norovirus are very short lived typically lasting 12 to 60 hours. Encourage fluid intake and monitor the temperature. Admission to hospital is not normally required unless the resident shows signs of dehydration (dizziness, headache, dry mouth, restricted or limited urine output, delirium).

Scrupulous hand hygiene is vital in controlling the spread of Norovirus. Support the resident to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. The virus will continue to be passed in the stool for many weeks after having loose stools.

Encourage the residents to stay in their room and dedicate a toilet or commode for their use only. If possible, dedicate a single member of staff to look after those with symptoms.

If a member of staff has Norovirus, they should stay off work until 48 hours after their last symptom.

What about admitting from a hospital that has Norovirus?

When residents are returning from hospital at any time, ask the ward staff if the person has recently experienced loose stools. If they have, check whether a stool sample has been sent for analysis.

If the resident had Norovirus and has been symptom-free for 72 hours, then they are able to be discharged from hospital, but be cautious of any items such as clothing that are returned with the person. Make sure all items are washed before re-use.

If residents are in the same ward as other people who have Norovirus, but the others have been symptom free for 72 hours, then they can be discharged.

For any queries or questions about Norovirus, please ask to speak to the infection prevention team at WSFT or contact Lynne Fuller, WSCCG Infection Prevention Lead on 01473 770223.
FLU JABS FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF

By Colleen Greenwood, Screening and Immunisation Coordinator, NHS England

Health care staff can help fight flu by encouraging those who are at risk to have the flu jab. The flu vaccination is particularly important for those who are at increased risk of flu, such as elderly people and those with other health conditions. These people are at increased risk of complications from flu, like pneumonia. Residents in care homes qualify for a free flu vaccination, as they are likely to be in at least one ‘at risk’ group.

As well as actively encouraging the people in your care to be vaccinated, getting vaccinated yourself is also important. Being vaccinated yourself can protect the people you care for from infection by reducing transmission of flu within health and social care premises and help to protect people who may have a reduced response to their own immunisations.

FLU OUTBREAK

By Diane Kent, Health Protection Nurse, Public Health England

What is an outbreak?
An outbreak is where there is more than one resident with flu-like symptoms with possibly staff affected within a five day period, this could be an outbreak. The signs & symptoms to be aware of are:
- cough with or without sputum
- nasal discharge, congestion, sneezing
- wheezing & shortness of breath
- sore throat
- raised temperature over 37.8°C
- chest pains
- in the elderly, any unexplained acute deterioration

Initiate standard principles for infection control
- isolate symptomatic residents and/or cohort residents where possible
- start enhanced cleaning
- allocate staff to either affected or unaffected areas
- encourage good respiratory hygiene. (Catch it, Bin it, Kill it)

Report the outbreak to your Local Health Protection Team
- for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Tel: 0344 225 3546
- have ready details of onset date, numbers affected & presenting symptoms
- the Health Protection Team will provide further advice and support, speak with GPs and advise on samples as necessary

Prevention measures
- immunisation for influenza & pneumococcal infections are available
- ensure all those eligible are offered vaccination.
- promote good respiratory hygiene within the home

Where to get more information

GET INVOLVED

If you have any news or views on any of these projects, please contact the partners through this email address: getinvolved@westsuffolkccg.nhs.uk
THIS MONTH’S MESSAGES

Carewise - Sharing Care Information

A new Suffolk information portal for the care sector, bringing together information about all aspects of adult social care in one place, has been launched this month.

Carewise has been created by The Suffolk Brokerage and can be found at [www.carewisesuffolk.co.uk](http://www.carewisesuffolk.co.uk)

With topic headings covering a variety of issues including dementia, specific conditions such as diabetes and stroke, medication, health and safety and end of life, the website is designed to point the way to useful sources of care information, both nationally and in Suffolk.

Covering good practice and legislation, the website includes information on training and qualifications and current developments in the fast-growing care sector – and the information is aimed at practitioners and anyone who is interested in social care.

The Suffolk Brokerage is an independent organisation supporting Suffolk’s health and social care sector. Its services are designed to support the delivery of high-quality care throughout the Suffolk.

Head of workforce development at The Suffolk Brokerage Louise Whitely said: “We hope people will find the information on this portal useful. It’s the first time that all the information on this topic has been put together in one place for everyone in Suffolk to access. We really welcome people’s views and feedback.”

For further information, please email info@carewisesuffolk.co.uk

Safeguarding

A consultation line has been set up for safeguarding referrals. This is available for care home managers/care home staff to use prior to logging a safeguarding referral in the event of any uncertainty; providing opportunity for discussion.

The number is 0345 606 1499 and is available in office hours, including over the Christmas period.

Care Home Project

Please see below an interview with Victoria Robinson, Manager of Melford Court Nursing Home, to highlight the impact of the West Suffolk Care Home Project and the role of the Care Home Clinical Support Manager.

Pharmacy Bank Holiday Opening

Remember to check the NHS England website for Christmas and New Year Pharmacy Bank Holiday opening times: [www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

SAVE THE DATE

West Suffolk Care Homes Conference - Friday 04 March 2016

West Suffolk Care Home Managers and Care Leads are invited to the Care Homes Conference at West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds on 04 March 2016.

A comprehensive programme developed from the feedback you provided at the previous conference, including guest speakers and experts in practice.

Another opportunity for you to discuss ‘all things care home’.

Further information, timings and booking details will follow.

WHO’S WHO?

Some key members of the team

- **Sue Smith**
  - Care Home Clinical Support Manager
  - Click here to email or telephone 07931 864 228

- **Veronica Breeze**
  - Care Home Assistant Practitioner
  - Click here to email or telephone 07931 864 225

- **Lisa Piper**
  - Care Home Assistant Practitioner
  - Click here to email or telephone 07985 614703

- **Dawn Barrick**
  - Cook
  - Clinical Transformation Lead, WSCCG
  - Click here to email or telephone 01284 758031

- **Trisha Stevens**
  - Project Manager, WSCCG
  - Click here to email or telephone 01284 758039

- **Becky Turner**
  - Project Support Officer, WSCCG
  - Click here to email or telephone 01284 758030

FEEDBACK

Did you know Jigsaw is also available as a hardcopy newsletter?

Please click here to request a hardcopy to be sent to you.

Do you have an idea or would you like to write an article for a future edition?

If so, please click here to email your suggestion.

To view previous editions of Jigsaw, please click here.