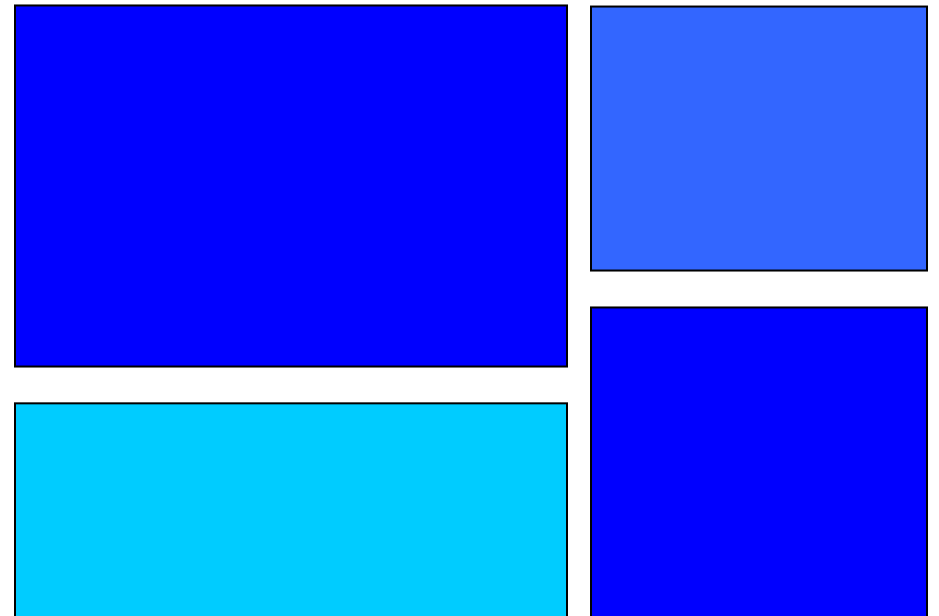


Information Leaflet for Residents

Viral Gastroenteritis

**For Further information or advice please contact
The Infection Prevention and Control Team on
01623 673477/673071**



What is viral gastroenteritis?

Viral gastroenteritis is an infection which causes diarrhoea and vomiting. It is caused by a virus called norovirus. Sometimes it is called 'winter vomiting disease' because it causes vomiting and is more common in the winter.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms are diarrhoea and vomiting. Some people feel very tired and lose their appetite. It is usually a short illness lasting two to three days. Occasionally it can last longer.

What is the treatment?

Treatment is not usually necessary. The body gets rid of the virus through the diarrhoea and vomiting. If you have viral gastroenteritis it is important to drink fluids to replace those that you lose. If you are unable to drink, your doctor may decide to give you a drip for a couple of days. If the vomiting persists, you may have an injection or tablet to help.

Is it infectious?

Viral gastroenteritis is very infectious. It is a common cause of outbreaks in schools, hospitals, nursing and residential homes and even cruise ships. Vomiting is more infectious than diarrhoea as it releases a large number of virus particles.

How is it spread?

Viral gastroenteritis is spread from hand to mouth. The virus can easily be spread in the environment, particularly in the toilet areas. If the virus gets on your hands and you have something to eat or drink, you may become infected. Anyone having

symptoms should be isolated in their room and use only their own toilet or commode. This is to make sure that the virus does not spread to any of the other residents. Residents should remain in isolation for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.

How can I stop myself from catching the virus?

Always wash your hands with soap and water before you have anything to eat or drink. Alcohol gel alone will not kill the virus but thorough hand washing with soap and water is effective. If you are a resident and unable to do this on your own, please ask a nurse or carer for help.

Can I still have visitors?

It is very important that visitors do not come into the Home if **they** have had any symptoms within 48 hours prior to visiting. People who have had viral gastroenteritis will be infectious until at least 48 hours after their last bout of diarrhoea or vomiting. If you ask a visitor to wash any of your clothes, staff can provide them with gloves if they wish. They should wash at the hottest temperature the items will allow. Tumble drying can also help to kill bugs.

What else can be done to prevent the virus spreading?

Staff should put procedures in place to prevent the infection spreading. These include the wearing of aprons and gloves and regular hand washing. Extra cleaning should be provided, particularly in toilet areas, in order to reduce the amount of virus particles in the environment. Also ensure that items such as fruit, sweets, chocolates etc are not left uncovered.