



What is Norovirus?

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Objectives

- Definition Norovirus
- How it is spread
- Signs and symptoms
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Actions for Healthcare settings
- Epidemiology

Definition

- Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the 'stomach flu', or gastroenteritis in people.

Other names:

- Norwalk-like virus
- Caliciviruses
- Small round structured virus
- Winter Vomiting Disease



How is it spread?

It is easily transmitted from one person to another by:

- Contact with an infected person
- Consuming contaminated food or water
- Contact with contaminated surfaces

Infectious dose is low ie: consuming few virus particles can cause illness

Signs and Symptoms

- Sudden onset symptoms
- Nausea and projectile vomiting
- Watery non bloody diarrhoea
- Stomach cramps
- Aching limbs
- Headache
- Low grade temperature

Not all infected experience all of the symptoms

- Usually symptoms start 12-48 hours after infection (incubation)
- Self limiting
- Symptoms last 12-60 hours
- Full recovery usually in 1-2 days



Treatment

- No specific treatment
- Prevention of Dehydration
 1. Oral fluids
 2. IV fluids

Prevention

- **Hand hygiene**
- Prompt disinfection of contaminated areas
- Careful food preparation
- Immediate removal and washing contaminated clothing/linen
- Discard vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and ensure area clean
- Education

Why does it cause outbreaks?

- Easily spread
- Can survive in environment for days
- Immunity is short lived
- Common in semi closed environments
 1. Cruise ships
 2. Hospitals
 3. Nursing Homes
 4. Schools

Actions for Healthcare Settings

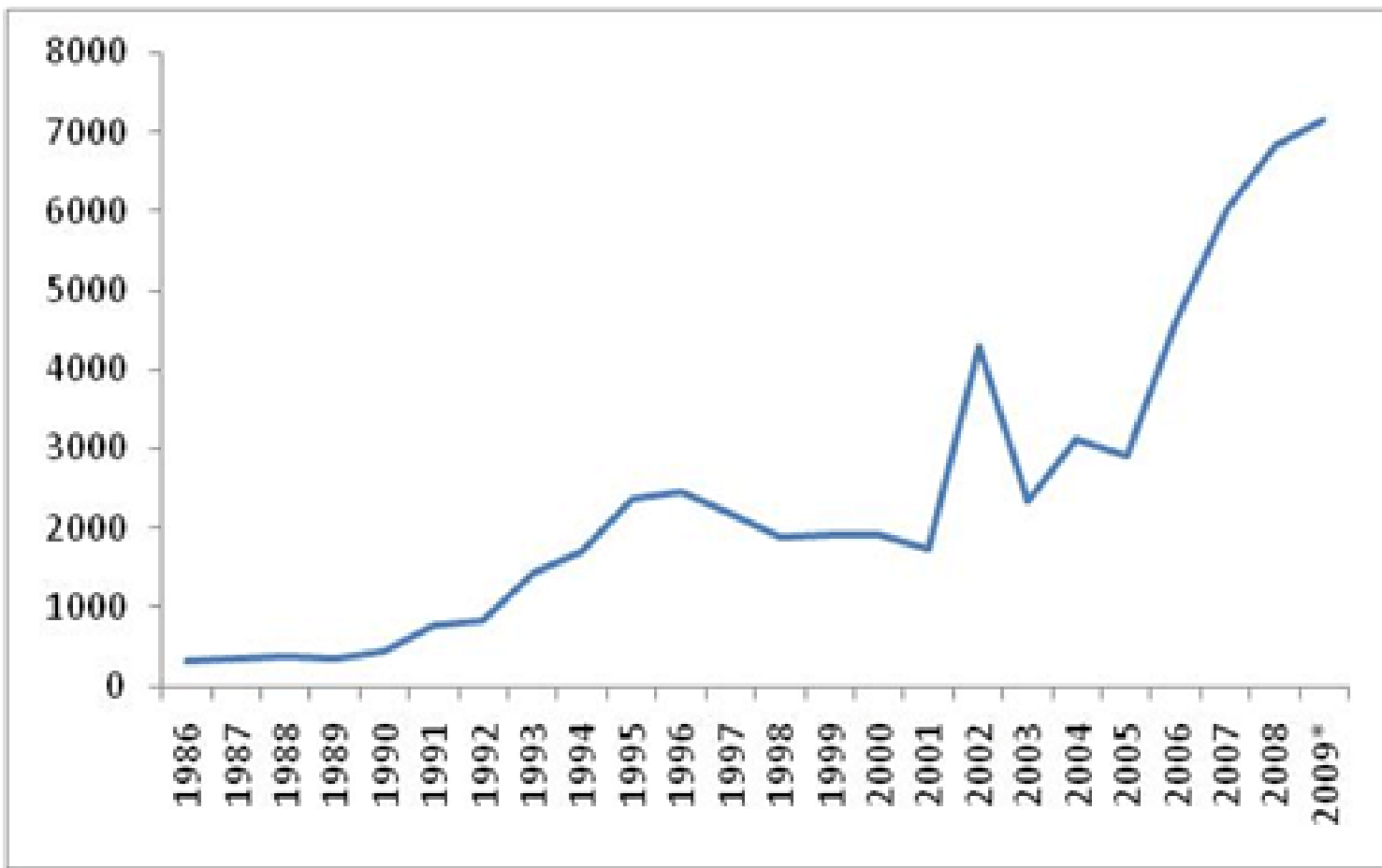
Visitors

- No visiting if they or immediate family are symptomatic
- Advisable for children to be restricted
- Essential to perform hand hygiene
- Record symptomatic relatives or visitors on case incident sheet

Staff

- Only essential staff to visit ward
- Bank and agency restrictions:
 1. Main remain rostered to affected ward for duration of outbreak
 2. They must have 2 days off before working on another ward
 3. Inform the bank/agency

Epidemiology



- Norovirus is not a notifiable disease
- Reporting of incidences is voluntary
- HPA only receives reports of outbreaks
- 130-250 outbreaks per year
- Estimate of 600,000- Million affected in UK each year.

