

# Outbreak of Norovirus-like Illness at a Long-Term Care Facility

## Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Staff

### What is an outbreak of a norovirus-like illness?

When two or more residents or staff are sick within 1-2 days of each other with the abrupt onset of vomiting **and** diarrhea.



### If an outbreak is suspected:

- 1 Report norovirus-like illness outbreaks to the Health Department 24/7 by using the [Online Outbreak Report Form](#) or calling 802-863-7240.
- 2 Collect stool samples from 2-5 different sick residents or staff. If your facility doesn't have collection kits on hand, the Health Department will arrange getting them to you. The person collecting the sample works with the Health Department to send the stool specimen to the Health Department Laboratory.
- 3 Start a list of sick residents and staff and track their symptoms.

### Take action to control the outbreak:

- Cohort patients and staff into three groups: **exposed and not sick**; **sick**; and **not exposed and not sick**.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after having contact with patients suspected or confirmed to have norovirus.
- Don't take new admissions.
- Minimize transfers. If a transfer is necessary, notify the receiving facility of the outbreak.
- Clean the ward and commonly touched surfaces three times a day with EPA-approved products.
- Remove and wash soiled clothes and linens immediately, then tumble dry.
- Exclude all sick personnel (e.g., direct care, food workers) from work until they have been asymptomatic for 48 hours.
- Put sick residents on contact precautions immediately and continue until they have been asymptomatic for 48 hours.
- Limit group activities and serve meals in rooms.
- Restrict non-essential visitors.
- Educate residents, staff and visitors about the outbreak.

**For more information:**  
[healthvermont.gov/norovirus](https://healthvermont.gov/norovirus)