



## Let's be aware of gastroenteritis from the norovirus!

Although the norovirus mainly spreads during the winter seasons, there have been cases of gastroenteritis at health clinics and social welfare centres outside of those seasons.

As well as trying to protect yourself from contracting the virus, try to wash your hands and gargle water often, and if you feel any symptoms coming on, consult a medical centre as soon as possible.

### 1. What is the norovirus?

It is a virus that mainly spreads during winter as a result of viral food poisoning. Gastroenteritis cases from the norovirus peak between December and March every year across the country.

### 2. How does it spread?

The virus can spread through oral infection, for example by consuming tainted or infected food (such as shellfish) or drinking water. Faecal-oral infection between people also spreads the virus (coming into contact with faeces or vomit of someone who is infected, and through oral contact with things that have been exposed to those faeces or vomit).

### 3. What are the symptoms?

After 1 or 2 days from the virus entering your body, symptoms such as severe nausea, vomiting, stomachache, diarrhoea, and fever will develop. It was once called the “winter vomiting disease” due to how often some need to vomit. It may also start off with symptoms similar to a common cold.

### 4. How can I protect myself?

Making sure you wash your hands often, and washing the virus from cooking utensils properly is the best way. In particular, pay scrupulous attention and try to wear gloves when dealing with vomit or faecal matter. Furthermore, as the norovirus is killed at high temperatures, heat up food properly (to 85 degrees, for at least a minute), and you can sterilise cooking utensils by heating them. Unlike bacterial food poisoning, the virus does not reproduce in food, nor release toxins.

### 5. How can I be cured?

Although there is no specific treatment or antiviral drugs which can deal with the norovirus, with symptomatic treatment, symptoms usually become less serious within several days. However, as the infection can become worse in those patients with lower immunity levels, such as the elderly or infants, it may be necessary to admit these patients to hospital.

