

Here's how to...

# Prevent Norovirus Outbreaks

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in the United States. Most of these outbreaks occur in the food service industry and can be prevented with proper food safety practices.

## Norovirus Symptoms

Information provided by the Centers for Disease Control. For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns).

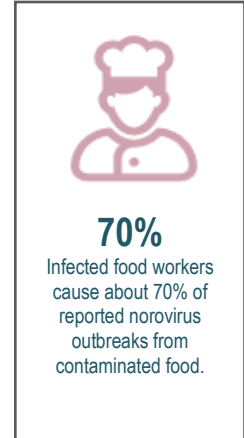
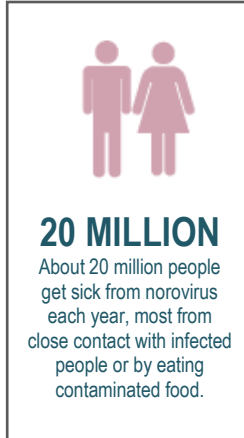
Norovirus can cause acute gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach, intestines or both. The most common symptoms are:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Dehydration

Other symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches

Those infected with the norovirus usually experience symptoms within 12 to 48 hours of being exposed. Hospitalization or death can occur.



## Tough Guys

Because norovirus is hard to kill, it:

- Remains infectious on foods even at freezing temperatures and until heated above 140°F.
- Can stay on countertops and serving utensils for up to 2 weeks.
- Resists many common disinfectants and hand sanitizers.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**1 in 5 food service workers have reported to work while sick with vomiting and/or diarrhea.** Fear of job loss and leaving coworkers short staffed are significant factors in the decision to go to work while sick.

## Best Practices for Franchisees

Report suspected illnesses to your local health department

As a restaurant franchisee, it is your responsibility to help prevent norovirus outbreaks by:

- Making sure that all employees adhere to proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensuring all employees avoid touching ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands.
- Training all employees in effective food safety practices.
- Establishing policies that require workers to stay home while sick with vomiting and/or diarrhea and for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop.
- Fostering a work environment that encourages workers to stay home sick by considering measures as paid sick leave or a staffing plan that includes on-call workers.

## Best Practices for Everyone



All food service workers should:

- Tell a manager when sick with vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Wash hands carefully and often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use utensils and single-use disposable gloves to avoid touching ready-to-eat foods with bare hands. Ready-to-eat foods are food items ready to be served, without additional preparation (e.g., raw fruits and vegetables for salads and sandwiches, baked goods, items already cooked).
- Regularly clean and sanitize surfaces and frequently touched objects, using chlorine-based products or other sanitizers approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for use against norovirus.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid serving undercooked food.