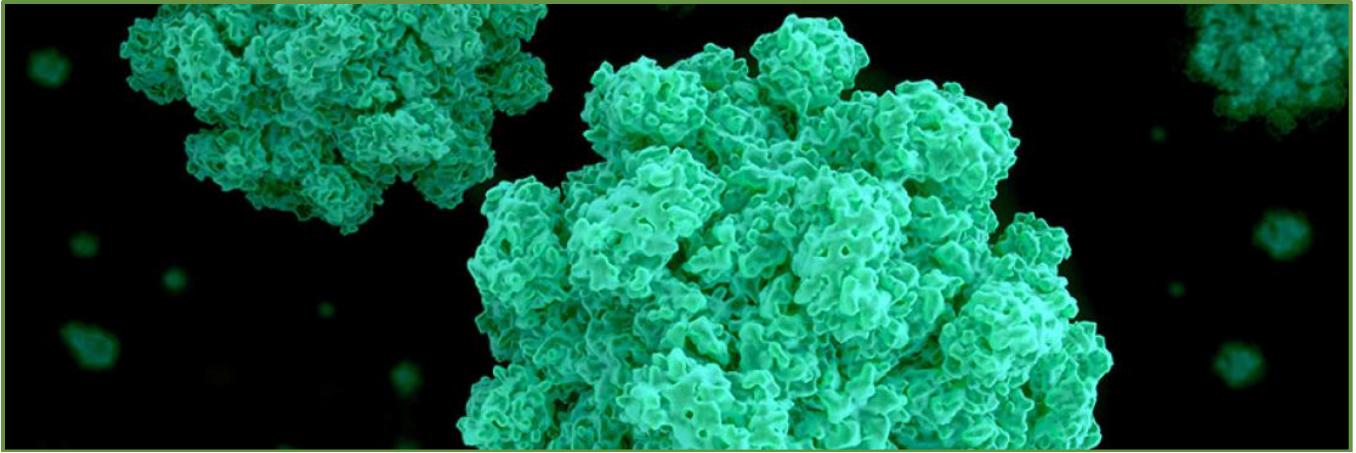


Food Safety Hazard: Norovirus



Characteristics/description

Norovirus is a group of related RNA viruses that cause gastroenteritis in humans. They are relatively resistant to heat and can survive temperatures as high as 140°F and the quick steaming processes that are often used for cooking shellfish.

Source

Noroviruses can easily be spread through contact with an infected person, contaminated food or water, or contaminated surfaces.

Effects on humans

The virus causes inflammation of the stomach or intestines or both (acute gastroenteritis). This inflammation leads to the sudden onset of stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, and diarrhea.

Incubation

Infected people may shed and thus transmit the virus before they show signs of disease. A person usually develops symptoms 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to norovirus. Most people with norovirus illness get better within 1-3 days.

Treatment for patients

Supportive therapy to include fluid and electrolyte replacement.

Risk reduction strategies

- Preventive measures include practicing proper hand hygiene, washing fruits and vegetables, and cooking seafood thoroughly. People with norovirus illness should not prepare food or care for others.
- Surfaces should be washed and decontaminated; soiled clothes and linens should be washed immediately and thoroughly.
- Gloves should be worn during cleaning and hands washed thoroughly after gloves are removed.

Key links

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Norovirus website,
<http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html>

Food and Agriculture Organization Safety of Fish and Fish Products website,
<http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/1522/en>

Food and Agriculture Organization: "Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Departments,"
ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Publications/Booklets/Practice_code_fish/CCFFP_2012_EN.pdf

Global prevalence of norovirus in cases of gastroenteritis: a systematic review and meta-analysis,
<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099%2814%2970767-4/abstract>