

CLEANING UP

"News and Views on Our Industry You Can Use"

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A Service of Wesclean Equipment & Cleaning Supplies, Ltd.

"Serving Western Canada for Over 25 Years"

OUR MISSION: To deliver in a timely and efficient manner superior cleaning products and excellence of service that meets and exceeds all our customer's requirements helping them perform their roles with efficiency and cost-effectiveness. To treat employees and associates with fairness and respect and to be supportive to our suppliers in product and market development which will solidify our position as Western Canada's top distributor.

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NORWALK/NORWALK-LIKE VIRUSES

Timely Information About These Nasty Bugs

It has been in the news a lot lately. It's a bug that takes a regular run at hospitals, nursing homes, schools, hotels and cruise ships – anywhere people gather.

It's the same bug that sidelines trains, airplanes and buses for decontamination. It's a tiny little microbe, but it leaves a long and disgusting legacy of vomit and diarrhea. *It's called the Norwalk Virus.*

Together with its first cousin, the Norwalk-like Virus (NLV), Norwalk is a common cause of food poisoning, viral gastroenteritis and profuse vomiting and watery diarrhea. While not usually fatal, these bugs can wreak major havoc if not dealt with promptly and properly.

What is Norwalk/ NLV?

Norwalk and NLV are in a family of viruses called Calciviridae. Their genus name is Norovirus. There are several species of Norwalk-like viruses and each species can have multiple strains. These viruses are of the so-called non-enveloped variety and as such are actually harder to kill than enveloped viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C and Influenza. Thus, they present a much greater challenge to housekeeping staff.

How to Disinfect?

For healthcare facilities, Noroviruses can be a real headache because they are so difficult to kill and are so easily transmitted from other people, objects, food, water and even via air. Three types of disinfectants are rec-

ommended by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, GA to deal with Norwalk/ NLV:

Bleach

The recommended concentration depends on which study one is referring to. A 10 minute contact time is considered the standard across all studies. The CDC study recommends a 1000 ppm dilution (approx 1:50 of household bleach with water) while other studies recommend a dilution of 1:9. **Caution:** Either of these dilution ratios could cause damage to floor coatings and other hard surfaces as well as fabrics. 200 ppm "no-rinse" bleach solution is *not* effective against Norovirus!

Phenolics

The CDC recommendation for phenolics is based based upon a study that *double-strength* phenolic would be sufficient to kill Norviruses. **Caution:** Phenolics should not be used around food or around children!

Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP)

Research into applications for AHP have determined that Canadian-made disinfectants are effective against against non-enveloped viruses like Norwalk in their regular dilution at a five minute contact time. **The Good News:** AHP products, once diluted are safe for use on *all* surfaces *including* fabrics.

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Important Notes:

- 1) **QUATS are not recommended.**
- 2) Chemical manufacturers can not or should not be making claims on their product labels that they can kill Norwalk. This is because no disinfectant has ever been tested against Norwalk or NLV *directly*. Because Human Caliciviruses will not grow in a laboratory, researchers use Feline Calicivirus as a surrogate.
- 3) As with *any* disinfectant, read the product labels and be sure the product not only does what it says it will do, but that the manufacturer is not making any false claims!

Management Issues

Norwalk is so infectious that if just one infected person carries Norwalk into a hospital emergency room or goes to visit a friend at the senior's residence, the result – 12 to 24 hours later – could be the start of a Norwalk outbreak.

Moreover, in hospitals, the virus will often affect staff more than patients. If enough doctors and nurses pick up a Norwalk infection, entire emergency rooms and hospital wards have to close because there are not enough people available to run them. Recent studies show that staff might remain infectious for as long as two weeks after symptoms have disappeared.

Hand Hygiene and Disinfection

Hand washing is critical in managing a Norwalk outbreak. The use of alcohol hand sanitizers is recommended for day-to-day use, and during any outbreak, although for non-enveloped viruses, alcohol is no more effective than hand washing with soap and water. Antiseptic soap provides no added benefit over regular hand soap and may even be detrimental.

During the normal course of cleaning a hospital, ordinary detergents are satisfactory for most surfaces and disinfection is necessary only in special areas. During a suspected or confirmed Norwalk/ NLV outbreak, hard surfaces should be properly cleaned and then disinfected using recommended products and procedures. This is

especially true in washrooms that are used by more than one person.

Non-launderable fabrics (eg. chairs, carpet) should be treated with Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide and/ or steam cleaned with water at a temperature of at least 71°C. Typically only steam cleaners with *in-line* heaters, such as truck-mounted extractors, can reliably maintain that temperature.

For housekeepers, it usually boils down to the speed of the response. If a spill is allowed to sit on a hard surface exposed and untreated for even a short period of time, many others in the area can be infected.

The spill has to be cleaned up and disinfected as soon as possible. **Do not use a vacuum:** The Norovirus is very small and can easily pass through even a HEPA filter and come to rest on other surfaces.

Housekeeping staffs are especially vulnerable to Norwalk/ NLV. If they do not wash their hands often, especially after removing work gloves, they are very vulnerable.

Education is the Key

The best weapon healthcare and other facilities have in their arsenal for the war against infectious diseases is *education*. Here are some websites you can visit to learn more:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/ccdr-rmtc – Health Canada's Communicable Disease Report.

www.cdc.gov – CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly

www.sexy-hands.com/ www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc – Hand hygiene promotion

www.viroxtech.com – Virox, the maker of Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide, lists on their website numerous technical and research pieces on this important topic.

The Last Word

Norovirus is a ubiquitous and highly contagious gastrointestinal pathogen! Remember the simple, three-part trick for staying ahead of Norwalk in healthcare facilities and elsewhere:

Wash your hands, clean your space, call Wesclean for products and help in dealing with all your infection control challenges.

Article Adapted from *Sanitation Canada* January/ February 2003 "A Norwalk Nightmare" and www.viroxtech.com. Used with permission.

When choosing a disinfectant, one must consider efficacy, spectrum, versatility, ease of use, cost, and safety.



Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP) is a Patented, colorless and volatile free liquid cleaning and disinfecting solution developed by Virox Technologies Inc. AHP is a synergistic blend of commonly used, safe ingredients that when combined with low levels of hydrogen peroxide dramatically increase its germicidal potency and cleaning performance. AHP contains only those ingredients listed on the U.S.A. EPA inert listing and the GRAS listing (Generally Regarded As Safe) published by the EPA which contribute to an unsurpassed health, safety and environmental profile.

AHP Benefits

Cleaner • Faster • Safer

- 0.5% Hydrogen Peroxide solution
- Broad spectrum biocide
- Cleans and disinfects
- Non-toxic in RTU form
- Environmentally safe
- 5 minute dwell time
- 24 month shelf life

Multi-Purpose Cleaners, Disinfectants and Sanitizers are available in concentrate, wet-wipes and RTU liquid.

Contact your Wesclean Sales Professional or Local Branch TODAY for more information on our full-line of AHP products



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