



UTAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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24 February 2017

To the Parents, Faculty, and Staff of Lakeview Elementary School:

This letter is to inform you that an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness has occurred in your child's school. Because this illness has spread so quickly, it appears to be highly contagious. Our assessment is that this illness is caused by norovirus (see fact sheet on reverse side).

If your child has any of the symptoms of norovirus, or even just an upset stomach, we ask that you do not send him/her to school until 72 hours after symptoms have ended. We also ask that if your child attending this school has siblings in other schools (public junior high school or public high school, charter high school, private daycare, etc.), that you take care to keep those siblings home from school if they are experiencing similar symptoms.

Anyone with symptoms can pass the virus from their hands to food. Any person with symptoms should not prepare food for anyone in the household. If you are obligated to prepare food, we recommend that you wear gloves.

By notifying you of this possible exposure, we are trying to control the spread and prevent new cases of this illness. If you have any questions about signs or symptoms of this illness, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

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Board of Health

Clyde Nielsen, R.Ph., Chair

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Norovirus

What is Norovirus?

Norovirus (also known as Norwalk and Norwalk-like virus) is a viral infection, and is a common cause of diarrhea and vomiting sickness in the United States.

Who gets Norovirus infection?

Any person of any age group can become infected. It occurs mainly in humans and is found in every part of the world. There are many strains of norovirus that makes it hard for the body to develop immunity to the virus.

How is Norovirus spread?

Norovirus is spread by infected people or contaminated food and water. The virus is found in stool and vomit.

You may get norovirus if you:

- Eat food or drink liquids that have been contaminated with norovirus;
- Touch surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then place your hands in your mouth;
- Have direct contact with another person who has the virus and has diarrhea or is vomiting (for example, when caring for someone or sharing foods or utensils).

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, non-bloody diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Headache and low-grade fever may also occur.

How soon after exposure do symptoms usually appear?

Most people will begin to have symptoms within 1 to 2 days, but some people may become ill as early as 10 hours or as late as 3 days.

How long do symptoms last?

Persons with norovirus usually recover within 2 to 3 days without serious or long-term health effects. Even though the virus is easy to spread, serious illness rarely occurs.

How can I keep from spreading the illness?

A person with diarrhea or vomiting should be excluded from school or food handling until 72 hours after symptoms have resolved.

What is the treatment?

No specific treatment is available. People should drink plenty of clear fluids. Rarely, people may become sick enough to go to the hospital. There is no vaccine available and antibiotics should not be used.

If I get it once, will I get it again?

Norovirus infection only gives you short-term immunity. A person may get sick each time he/she comes in contact with the virus.

How can Norovirus infection be prevented?

Here are ways to reduce your risk of getting or spreading the virus:

- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner;
- Remove and wash clothing or linens that are soiled with stool or vomit;
- Flush or discard any vomit and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

http://health.utah.gov/epi/phdepts/a_z.html#

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