



Health Advisory- Norovirus Outbreak in Humboldt County

12/19/2017

Humboldt County Public Health has been working to contain a gastrointestinal illness (GI) outbreak caused by norovirus. As of December 15, 2017, multiple schools in the South Bay Union School District had reported likely norovirus infection rates of up to 30% of the student population. Students and staff have become ill and school officials, based on the recommendations of Humboldt County Public Health, have closed the South Bay Union School District this week to help with containment.

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus sometimes called “stomach flu” but is not related to influenza (flu) viruses. A person may be infected with norovirus more than once as there are many different strains of the virus.

Norovirus infection can spread quickly, especially in closed and crowded environments. The virus is found in the feces and vomit of infected people and can spread easily from person to person. **People with norovirus illness are most contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill and for the first few days after they recover.** An individual's stool can still be infectious for up to two weeks.

Hand washing with soap and water is the best means of preventing transmission. Hand sanitizer is less effective than good hand washing.

Actions Requested of All Clinicians:

Humboldt County Public Health has sufficient clinical evidence (with PCR confirmation) to label this as an outbreak of norovirus; therefore, sample submission for presumed Norovirus is not needed unless the provider has a specific need for diagnostic purposes.

1. **CONSIDER** limiting appointments to those who have had symptoms of norovirus for greater than 36 hours, or who show signs of dehydration, metabolic imbalance, or other clinical symptoms.
2. **INQUIRE** what school(s)/ childcare center the patient attends when pediatric or college aged students present with acute GI illness (vomiting, diarrhea); consider any congregate exposures for adults.
3. **REPORT** any patients presenting with GI illness and Norovirus- like symptoms as mandated by Title 17 during an outbreak.
 - a. Via [CMR FORM https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/52309](https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/52309)
 - i. FAX to 707-445-7346 Please add the symptoms and location of likely transmission in the comment field as well as any other pertinent information.
4. **COLLECT** stool specimens only if confirmation of disease is clinically needed by the provider. Specimens can be submitted to Humboldt County Public Health Lab or a commercial laboratory. Please contact the Humboldt County Public Health Lab at 707-268-2179 if you wish to submit a specimen.
5. **DIRECT** patients with GI illness to remain home from work or school until 24-48 hours after symptoms have resolved, to prevent additional spread of the virus.





6. **EDUCATE** patients on how to prevent the spread of GI illness, including proper hand hygiene, food preparation, cleaning surfaces, and laundering of contaminated linens and clothing. For more information see the attached handouts and visit the [CDC website](#) for Norovirus.

Symptoms will appear within two days after exposure. Most people will recover within 1-3 days after symptoms appear.

- Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, headache, body aches, and/or a low-grade fever.
- Norovirus symptoms can lead to dehydration, especially in young children, older adults and people with chronic illnesses. Severe symptoms caused by dehydration include decreased urinary output, orthostatic hypotension, and metabolic abnormalities.

Treatment

- Treatment is supportive, primarily maintaining hydration and preventing further spread of the virus

Additional Resources

[“Stop Norovirus!” Poster](https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/images/stop-norovirus-lg.jpg) <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/images/stop-norovirus-lg.jpg>

[Protect Yourself Infographic- English](https://www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus/tips.html) <https://www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus/tips.html>

[Protect Yourself Infographic- Spanish](https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/tips-infographic-sp.html) <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/tips-infographic-sp.html>

[CDPH Norovirus Fact Sheet 2015](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/NorovirusFactSheet.pdf)

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/NorovirusFactSheet.pdf>

[CDC Norovirus Webpage](https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/) <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>

[Norovirus Illness key Facts](https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/downloads/keyfacts.pdf) <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/downloads/keyfacts.pdf>

[Norovirus in Healthcare Facilities](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110-ANoroCaseFactSheet508.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110-ANoroCaseFactSheet508.pdf>

[Key infection Control Recommendations for the Control of Norovirus in Healthcare Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110A-NorovirusControlRecomm508A.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110A-NorovirusControlRecomm508A.pdf>

[A Norovirus Outbreak Control Resource Toolkit for Healthcare Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110-ANorovirusIntroLetter508.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/229110-ANorovirusIntroLetter508.pdf>

For a digital copy of this document, please visit <https://humboldt.gov.org/2237/Provider-Communication-from-Public-Health>

