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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Norovirus outbreak forces more school closures

Due to a further increase in the number of students with symptoms consistent with norovirus, five additional schools have elected to close early for the winter break.

The schools are Eagle Prairie Elementary and Monument Middle School, both in the Rio Dell School District, Ridgewood and Cutten schools in the Cutten School District, and Fieldbrook Elementary School.

The closure of all five schools will take effect Friday morning.

This brings to 18 the number of Humboldt County schools closed due to a norovirus outbreak that first appeared last week. Additional schools are contemplating closure.

There is no cure for the highly contagious virus, which generally passes on its own within a few days. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that it cannot be treated with antibiotics, because it is a viral, rather than bacterial, infection. Drinking lots of fluids is recommended to replace those lost during the course of illness.

Symptoms include nausea, fever, vomiting, stomach pain and diarrhea. Infected people typically show symptoms within 12 to 48 hours of exposure to the virus. Infectiousness is believed to last at least 24 hours after recovery.

Hand washing is the best defense. Wash hands frequently throughout the day with soap and water. Hand sanitizing gels and wipes are ineffective against the virus. Clean contaminated surfaces thoroughly with a strong disinfectant such as bleach.

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