



COUNTY OF YOLO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2017

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Norovirus/Gastrointestinal Illness on the Rise

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Health & Human Services Agency has been following a gastrointestinal illness (GI) outbreak. Over 952 students, teachers and staff are sick with stomach cramps, vomiting and/or diarrhea in schools throughout Yolo County. The number of sick people is increasing every day at a very alarming rate. The outbreak has been identified and confirmed by specimen testing to be the Norovirus which is highly contagious. Norovirus commonly spreads through touching surfaces contaminated with the virus, close contact with someone who is infected or eating contaminated food or drink.

Norovirus is the leading cause of outbreaks of diarrhea and vomiting in the U.S., and it spreads quickly. Norovirus spreads by contact with an infected person, by touching a contaminated surface, eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. Norovirus particles can even float through the air and then settle on surfaces, spreading contamination. Norovirus particles are extremely small and billions of them are in the stool and vomit of infected people. Any vomit or diarrhea may contain Norovirus and should be treated as though it does. People can transfer Norovirus to others for at least three days after being sick

Symptoms

Include fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain. Symptoms last for 1-3 days. However, after symptoms go away, people are still highly infectious, especially the first 48 hours. There is no treatment for Norovirus. **The most important steps to prevent the spread of Norovirus is to stay home if you are sick for another 48 hours after symptoms go away and for everyone to regularly wash their hands.**

Outbreak Summary

A total of 952 clinical cases of gastrointestinal illness are reported in 32 schools in Yolo County:

- Davis Joint Unified School District (181)
- Esparto Unified School District (49)
- Washington Unified School District (217)
- Woodland Joint Unified School District (434)
- Winters Joint Unified School District (39)
- University of California, Davis (32)

Yolo County Public Health Officer Ron Chapman, MD, MPH advises the following actions be taken to prevent further spread of the infection:

- Stay home if there is any sign of illness such as stomach pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Stay home for an additional 48 hours after symptoms are gone. Even though you feel better, you still carry the virus and can infect other people.
- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day with soap and water.
- Clean contaminated surfaces regularly with appropriate disinfectant, such as bleach.
- Do not prepare food and drink for others if you are sick.
- Questions related to symptoms and treatment should be directed to your primary care provider or clinic.
- If your child is sick, notify the school and tell them your child's symptoms.

The spread of Norovirus can be prevented by practicing proper hand hygiene. Important strategies include washing hands with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers, and always before eating, preparing or handling food.

For more information about Norovirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov/Norovirus/. Information about Norovirus and templates for letters and guidance are also available by clicking on "Communicable Disease Investigation and Control" on the Yolo County website.

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