



Health and Human Services
Department
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DATE

Dear Parent or Guardian and Staff,

Lincoln County Public Health Department has become aware that, some students at _____ School are absent because of vomiting or diarrhea. The Health Department is working with the school district to investigate the situation. From the information we have at this point, it appears that the illness might be caused by Norovirus.

What is Norovirus? This is a common but highly contagious virus that is usually spread by person-to-person contact but can also be spread through food, water, or contact with things that infected persons have touched. Illness usually occurs one or two days after being exposed. Infected persons are contagious while they have symptoms and usually for a couple of days after symptoms have resolved.

Symptoms: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. Some people may have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting about 1 or 2 days.

How serious is it? People with norovirus disease may feel very sick and vomit many times a day. Most do not feel sick enough to seek medical attention, and most get better within 1 or 2 days. Few people with norovirus disease are hospitalized; but the vomiting and diarrhea can lead to dehydration requiring medical attention.

If you think you have this infection, the following will help you and help prevent others from getting sick:

- **Stay home to rest for at least 48 hours after the vomiting and diarrhea have stopped** and you are feeling better.
- Sip fluids frequently as tolerated. Half-strength apple juice, sports fluids, flat lemon-lime soda, or popsicles can help to prevent dehydration.
- **WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY:** Rub all surfaces of hands with soap, rub lathered hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds, and then thoroughly rinse the hands under a stream of water.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom, cleaning, changing diapers, or before eating or preparing food. Avoid sharing towels, and if possible ask ill persons to use only one bathroom.
- Disinfect household surfaces with a bleach solution (1 cup of household bleach to a gallon of water).
- Call your health provider if symptoms last longer than three days; if you have bloody diarrhea or a fever greater than 100.5°F; or if you think you are becoming dehydrated.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need assistance, please contact the Lincoln County Public Health Department Communicable Disease Public Health Nurses, at 541-265-0587.