

Mid-Michigan District Health Department HEALTH ADVISORY

Counties within the Mid-Michigan District, as well as surrounding counties, experience an increase of gastro-intestinal illness commonly referred to as "stomach flu" this time each year. This is most commonly caused by a viral illness called Norovirus. We need your help to prevent further spread of this illness!

***Noroviruses** are a group of viruses that cause gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-i-tis) in humans. The symptoms of norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and cramping. Noroviruses are transmitted through the fecal-oral route, either by consumption of fecally contaminated food or water, direct person-to-person spread, or environmental and inanimate object contamination.*

What you can do as a foodservice establishment to help prevent the spread of Noroviruses:

Ill Employees

- ❶ Food handlers who are ill with gastrointestinal symptoms **MUST NOT** prepare or serve food for others under any circumstances **(2009 Food Code 2-201.12)**. It is strongly **recommended** that symptomatic staff members be sent home immediately.
- ❷ It is **highly recommended** that employees that have been ill with suspected Norovirus should not return to work for a period of 48 to 72 hours after symptoms have ended.
- ❸ Food handlers who are ill with gastrointestinal symptoms are to be restricted from working with exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, and linens; and unwrapped single-service and single use articles, in the food establishment **(2009 Food Code 2-201.12)**. Diligent hand washing practices should be followed.

Hand washing

- ❶ After using the restroom, sneezing, coughing, and before and after food preparation, **ALL** employees should wash hands with warm running water and soap, using friction for 20 seconds. Hands should be dried with a single-service paper towel or air dryer.
- ❷ It is recommended that persons involved in bussing tables, handling of used utensils, cups or any dishes exercise regular thorough handwashing, particularly before eating or handling food or clean utensils.

If you suspect Norovirus illness has struck your facility, immediately contact your local health department office for further instructions and begin the disinfection procedures listed below:

Disinfection Procedures for Food Establishments

- **What works best:** Disinfect with Chlorine bleach solution (sodium hypochlorite -NaOCl). DO NOT USE quaternary compounds as they are not effective in killing noroviruses.
- **Examples of items to disinfect** include: doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, commodes, bath rails, phones, counters, chairs, tables, hand rails, elevator buttons, light switches, mattress covers, aprons, uniforms, linens, bedding and ice machines.

Chlorine Bleach Concentrations and Mixing Instructions

- **Use for utensils, food/mouth contact items, toys**
200ppm (parts per million)
 - 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1-gallon water (1:250 dilution)
- **Use for non-porous surfaces like tile floors, counter-tops, sinks, toilets**
1000ppm (parts per million)
 - 1/3-cup bleach in 1-gallon water (1:50 dilution)
- **Use for porous surfaces like wooden floors**
5000ppm (parts per million)
 - 1 cup bleach plus 2/3-cup bleach in 1-gallon water (1:10 dilution)

Contact time

- Leave bleach on surface for 10-20 minutes, and then rinse with clean water.

*Please reference the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services [Viral Gastroenteritis \(Norovirus\): Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection of Norovirus](#) document, for more comprehensive information on cleaning and disinfection. Contact your local health department if an employee or any customers are ill with symptoms consistent with Norovirus. You can also log onto www.mmdhd.org for more information.

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