

# *Colville School District 115*

## *A Lifetime of Learning*

### **Norovirus: What is it?**

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that causes acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and small intestines) which leads to abdominal pain, projectile vomiting, and diarrhea. An exposed person will develop symptoms within 12-24 hours and will typically experience vomiting and diarrhea for 1-3 days.

### **How is Norovirus spread?**

Norovirus is spread by contaminated individuals touching items or handling food, or through vomit or feces of infected individuals.

Washing hands with soap and water is more effective than hand sanitizers. When washing hands hum the happy birthday song completely through 2-3 times before rinsing. Hand sanitizer containing 62% ethanol may be used if there is no sink and soap available.

### **How long is someone contagious?**

A person is contagious from the moment they begin feeling sick until 48 hours after they are no longer having any signs of illness.

### **What are the complications?**

For most people, there are no complications (aside from nausea, vomiting, cramping, and diarrhea). Be sure to drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration. Severe dehydration (extreme thirst, dry mouth, little or no urination, and confusion) is a medical emergency.

### **How do I prevent this disease?**

Use great handwashing (see above) and wash hands often. Carefully wash fruits and vegetables before eating. Thoroughly cook shellfish before eating. Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. Keep fingers out of mouth, eyes, and nose. Avoid contact with infected people if possible.

### **What do I do if we have sickness in our home?**

Please keep your child and yourself home if there is vomiting or diarrhea symptoms in family members. If your student is experiencing symptoms, they will need to remain out of school for 48 hours after all symptoms subside. **DO NOT** prepare food while sick or for three days after you have recovered.

If clothing or bedding are soiled, handle items carefully (no shaking or agitating) and place them in the washer right away.

Contaminated surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected right away. Mix one gallon of water with  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of household bleach and spray onto surface. Let it sit on the contaminated surface for five minutes before rinsing clean.

If you have symptoms avoid contact with healthy people. This means that no one comes to your home and you don't leave your home until 48 hours after all of the symptoms resolve.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff, 2014.

<<http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/pubdocs/InfectiousDiseaseControlGuide.pdf>>.

Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties. Exclusion Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Settings.

<<http://www.co.washington.or.us/HHS/CommunicableDiseases/upload/trico-school-exclusion-Jan2012-WA-Co.pdf>>.