

County of Moore
Department of Health
705 Pinehurst Avenue • P.O. Box 279
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Norovirus in North Carolina

Recently State Public Health Officials have reported that several health departments across North Carolina are experiencing multiple outbreaks of norovirus.

“Even though no outbreak of norovirus is currently reported in Moore County, according to Robert Wittmann, Health Director, it is important for residents to follow recommended steps everyone can take to avoid this common and unpleasant gastrointestinal illness.”

Noroviruses are easily transmitted by touching a contaminated surface as well as by direct contact or by eating food or drinking liquids that have been contaminated with the virus. Noroviruses are notoriously difficult to kill with normal cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Surfaces that have been contaminated with stool or vomit should be cleaned immediately and disinfected with a freshly prepared diluted bleach solution.

Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. Some may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and a general sense of tiredness. The symptoms can begin suddenly and an infected person may go from feeling well to very sick in a very short period of time. In most people, the illness lasts for about one or two days. People with norovirus illness are contagious from the moment they begin feeling sick until at least three days after they recover. Some people may be contagious for even longer. Infection can be more severe in young children and elderly people. Dehydration can occur rapidly and may require medical treatment or hospitalization. In North Carolina, norovirus cases most commonly occur from November through March.

People who are sick with vomiting or diarrhea should not work, go to school or attend daycare while they are having symptoms. Even though there is no specific medication to treat norovirus, infected people should drink plenty of liquids to replace fluid lost through vomiting and diarrhea.

To prevent norovirus people should:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet, and after changing diapers. Hand sanitizers are not as effective against norovirus.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces contaminated with vomit or diarrhea immediately using a solution of 5 tablespoons to 1.5 cups of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Stay home from work or school if you are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea.

“To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury.”
<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>

Environmental Health
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- Don't prepare food for others for three days after your symptoms go away.
- Wash fruits and vegetables and thoroughly cook shellfish before eating them.
- Immediately machine wash and dry any clothing or linen that is contaminated with vomit or stool. Use rubber gloves to remove and handle the linen, and wash your hands afterward.

For more information about norovirus, visit the Moore County Health Department website at:
www.moorecountync.gov.

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