

Promoting a Safer and Healthier Community Since 1854

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For Immediate Release

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Public Health Administrator

Winnebago County Health Department reminds community that an increase of norovirus illness is very common this time of year

During the winter months of January through April, an increase of norovirus illness is a common occurrence. Currently, the Health Department is noticing an increase of norovirus illness in our community. The Winnebago County Health Department reminds residents that good personal hygiene is the best way to stop the spread of this illness, which is highly contagious and is spread from human to human, especially in a large group setting.

This illness is sometimes confused with the influenza which is a respiratory illness. Symptoms of norovirus is abdominal pain, body aches, headache, tiredness and low-grade fever. Symptoms typically last 1 to 2 days and subside on their own, usually with no long term health effects. Dehydration can be a problem with such infections, especially in the very young, the elderly and people with other illnesses.

Noroviruses can be spread by:

- Eating food or drinking liquids infected with the virus
- Touching infected surfaces or objects
- Having person-to-person contact
 - Being present while someone is vomiting
 - Sharing food or drink, or eating from the same utensils
 - Caring for a sick person
 - Shaking hands
 - Not washing hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before eating prepared food

Persons can help reduce their risk of coming in contact with noroviruses by taking these precautionary steps:

- Staying home when ill to reduce the risk of infecting others.
- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toileting or changing diapers and before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of diarrhea or vomiting by using a bleach-based household cleaner. If using liquid household bleach prepared daily, one part bleach to nine parts water (1:10 dilution) is recommended.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with feces or vomitus (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

For more information from CDC on norovirus illness that includes environmental prevention procedures go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/norovirus.htm>. For the CDC norovirus illness key facts pdf which provides tips to prevent the spread of the virus go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/downloads/norovirus-keyfacts.pdf>, or contact the Winnebago County Health Department at www.wchd.org, or by phone at 815-720-4000.



Service Locations

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