Noroviruses in the News

What is the Norovirus and why is it in the news?

Norovirus is a group of related viruses that infect the stomach and intestines. Infection by norovirus causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines (acute gastroenteritis). It is the most common cause of acute gastroenteritis in the United States.

There are many different strains of norovirus. In 2012, a new strain of norovirus was discovered in Australia and it has spread worldwide. Currently, this strain is the most common source of infection by a norovirus in the United States.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of infection include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramping. In some cases, a low-grade fever, chills, muscle aches, and fatigue can accompany these symptoms. Symptoms improve within 1 to 3 days for most people.

How do you get it?

Everyone is susceptible to infection and it is highly contagious. Noroviruses spread quickly from person to person in close spaces like hospitals, schools, day care centers and hotels. The viruses are found in the stool or vomit of those who are infected. The virus spreads when the infected person touches food, other people or surfaces.

Children, the elderly or anyone with a weakened immune system are the most susceptible to infection. But anyone can become infected and spread it.

Noroviruses cause about 21 million illnesses each year in the United States, and contribute to 70,000 hospitalizations and 800 deaths (mostly among young children and the elderly).

Headlines

February 11, 2013

A class action lawsuit was filed last Friday against the _____ restaurant, charging the buffet-style restaurant was negligent in last December’s norovirus outbreak in Casper, WY.

The Wyoming class action lawsuit follows release of report by the state epidemiologist, finding that Casper’s norovirus outbreak, from Nov. 17 to Dec. 19, was based at the restaurant and spread in part by numerous employees who continued to work with symptoms of diarrhea and/or vomiting.

From: Food Safety News
http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2013/02/class-action-lawsuit-filed-over-golden-coral-outbreak/
**How long are you contagious?**
People who are infected are contagious for at least 3 days starting from the onset of the symptoms.

**What is the treatment?**
There is no vaccine and there is no specific treatment. If infected, drink plenty of fluids to replenish fluids lost due to vomiting and diarrhea. If you suspect that you or someone you are caring for is severely dehydrated, call the doctor.

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### Protect Yourself from Norovirus!

1. **Wash your hands often**
2. **Rinse fruits & vegetables**
3. **Cook shellfish thoroughly**
4. **Clean surfaces & wash laundry**
5. **When you’re sick, don’t prepare food or care for others**

**Use soap & water**
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer when soap is not available
- Always wash hands after using the toilet or changing diapers & before eating or preparing food

**Noroviruses can survive low cooking temps**
- Quick steaming processes may not kill noroviruses

**Disinfect surfaces with a bleach-based cleaner**
- Wash soiled clothes & linens in warm water and detergent, then tumble dry

**Wait 2 to 3 days after you recover**
- Wash hands often, even after you recover

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**Source:** CDC at http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/resources.html

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