

CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
BOARD OF HEALTH  
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**Methods to Control Norovirus in Childcare Centers and Schools**

**HANDWASHING**

Children and staff must wash their hands often. Scheduling breaks for handwashing will help to prevent illness and develop good hygiene habits.

Staff should supervise young children to be sure that hands are properly washed, rinsed and dried.

***Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for proper handwashing. Sanitizers are not usually effective against Norovirus.***

**EXCLUSION – keeping sick people out of the facility**

Excluding sick people will reduce the chance for making others ill or causing an outbreak.

Children or staff who are ill with Norovirus should be excluded for 48 hours after symptoms end.

**GROUPING**

Keep all staff who worked with ill children in the same classroom/area to limit the spread of illness.

***If there is an outbreak in the Toddler Room, keep the same staff working in that room until the outbreak ends – do not let them move to other rooms and possibly infect more people.***

Sick children or staff who are waiting for a ride home should be kept away from others. Do not allow sick people in common areas such as hallways, entry ways, etc.

**FOOD HANDLING**

Norovirus can spread through contaminated food and drinks, so it is very important to follow safe food handling procedures.

Exclude staff who are ill or were exposed for at least 48 hours after symptoms end.

Throw away all food prepared by an ill staff member – it may be contaminated.

Require gloves for all food handlers – preparing and serving.

Clean and disinfect all equipment and surfaces.

Food service staff should have a dedicated restroom that is not shared with others.

Emphasize proper handwashing – especially after restroom use and before handling food.

Individual meals are safer in terms of illness spread compared to family-style, buffet or self-serve.

No sharing of cups, plates and utensils.

Consider single-use/throwaway materials if there is not a way to thoroughly clean, such as a dish machine with detergent and sanitizer.

Reduce the risk of spreading disease by keeping ill employees and all non-food workers away from areas of food preparation, service and storage.

### **CLEANING**

Following diarrhea and/or vomiting, immediately clean and disinfect all affected surfaces.

Immediately remove all contaminated clothing, linens, rugs, etc.

Handle all materials gently – do not agitate, shake out or throw the items.

Wear disposable gloves and a face mask at all times when handling dirty laundry.

Throw away the gloves and mask and wash your hands right after handling.

Wash clothes with detergent for the longest cycle available.

### **DISINFECTION**

There are two accepted methods for disinfection:

Bleach – highly effective, but could be an irritant to people and may damage some surfaces.

US EPA-approved disinfectant – please see the EPA list of approved solutions.

***DO NOT USE quaternary ammonia because it is not effective against Norovirus.***

**\*For more information about proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures, please review the [Cleaning & Disinfection Guidelines for Norovirus in Childcare Centers & Schools](#) document, which is a part of this toolkit.**

### **QUESTIONS**

Please call 216.201.2080 to speak with a disease investigator.