

January 30, 2015

Dear Longwood University Community Member:

You might have heard reports about a number of cases of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and low grade fever in the greater Farmville area. Based on the nature of the symptoms and quick spread of the illness, norovirus is suspected to be the cause. Norovirus is a very common gastrointestinal virus that is often spread person-to-person or from an infected food source. The virus is very contagious and can spread rapidly in a community. Close living conditions is a common factor that can lead to rapid spread of the virus. During the cooler months, the Health Department commonly receives reports of Norovirus outbreaks in congregant living facilities.

We are concerned about preventing transmission of the virus. By following these simple tips, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of infection and prevent further spread of the illness to others:

1. **Stay in your room or at home while ill** - Persons with norovirus symptoms should remain away from others for a minimum of 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
2. **Practice proper hand hygiene on a routine, regular basis** – including thoroughly washing hands with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and and always before eating or preparing food. Frequent hand-washing is a critical step in prevention. Please note that hand sanitizer is NOT affective against norovirus.
3. **Practice proper environmental cleaning including disinfecting contaminated surfaces** with a bleach-based household cleaner or bleach – water solution.
4. **Wash any soiled laundry immediately and thoroughly.** Handle soiled items belonging to someone ill with norovirus carefully to avoid spreading the virus. If available, wear rubber or disposable gloves while handling soiled clothing or linens and wash hands thoroughly afterwards. The items should be washed with detergent at the maximum available cycle length and then machine dried.
5. **Avoid handling and preparing food while ill.** Symptomatic food handlers should stay home for a minimum of 48 hours after their last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.

For more information about Norovirus, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus/>.

Sincerely,

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