

MEDIA RELEASE

Information **Advisory** **Warning** **Update**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Health Department Recommending Norovirus Precautions

Due to increased norovirus-like illness in Michigan, the St. Clair County Health Department is recommending residents take precautions to stay healthy. The virus is very contagious and is passed through vomit and feces. Contamination can reach as far as 40 feet from the source. Norovirus is easily transmitted through food, person-to-person contact, or by contaminated surfaces causing stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea and vomiting. Outbreaks happen throughout the year, however over 80% occur from November to April. Norovirus is NOT related to the flu virus, a respiratory illness prevented by getting a seasonal flu vaccination. There is no vaccination against norovirus.

Illness usually begins 12-48 hours after exposure. People infected are most contagious from the moment they start feeling sick and during the first days after recovery. Norovirus can be still be spread for two weeks or more after recovery. It is important to stay home when sick. Avoid public places, social events and gatherings. This will help stop the spread of further illness.

Anyone can be infected with norovirus and get sick. Children and older adults can be seriously affected. When sick with vomiting and diarrhea, avoid sending children to daycare and school until illness ends. Persons working in nursing homes, those taking care of patients, or anyone who handles food **should stay out of work at least 48-72 hours after symptoms end.**

Prevention is key:

- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap. Hand sanitizers do NOT work against norovirus.
- Handle and prepare food safely

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- Properly disinfect all contaminated surfaces using bleach based household cleaner as directed on product label.
- Wash all soiled clothing and linens
- Avoid food or water from sources that may be contaminated

For additional norovirus guidance, precautions and cleaning decontamination visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html> or call our Environmental Health Division at (810) 987-5306.

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