



Guidelines for Restaurants

Management of Norovirus Outbreaks in Retail Food Establishments

About Norovirus

What is Norovirus?

It is often called the stomach flu, although, it actually isn't influenza at all, it is a stomach virus.

How long does it take for you to get sick?

Once someone is exposed to the virus, it takes 12 - 48 hours for their symptoms to start.

How long will you be sick?

People are usually sick for 12 - 60 hours

What are the symptoms of norovirus?

Sudden onset of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, fever, headache, chills, and muscle aches.

How is it spread?

Norovirus is usually spread person-to-person when infected people don't wash their hands properly after using the bathroom and then touch items or food that will be placed in someone else's mouth (food, drink garnishes, pacifier, cigarettes, gum, etc.). Norovirus is **VERY** infectious, and is concentrated in diarrhea and/or vomit of infected people.

1 gram of diarrhea (equal to 1/4 teaspoon of water or the weight of a dime) from someone with norovirus can have **5 billion viruses.**

1/4 tea spoon water=1gram



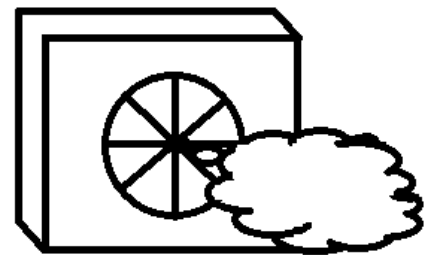
one dime=1gram



You can become infected by just **20 viruses!**



Viruses can stay on surfaces for 3 - 4 weeks at room temperature!



Norovirus can also spread through the air (when someone throws up).

It can travel 10 feet in the air!

And even further if there is an HVAC system, fan or wind.

People are most contagious the moment they begin feeling ill until diarrhea stops, but they can remain contagious until at least 48 hours after feeling better.

How can you treat norovirus?

There are no drugs to treat norovirus or vaccination to prevent it. Replacing fluids and electrolytes is the main treatment.

Norovirus Outbreaks

What is a norovirus outbreak?

If two or more people at your establishment are ill with norovirus, you have an outbreak. This may be two or more ill employees, and/or customers. Outbreaks are fairly common, and immediate action must be taken to prevent other people from getting sick.

Call Public Health if you suspect a Norovirus outbreak in your establishment!



Norovirus can spread quickly, making staff and customers sick.

If you suspect an outbreak at your establishment:

- Call the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) or your local public health department within 24 hours!

CDPHE Phone Numbers:

Communicable Disease Branch: 303-692-2700
Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability: 303-692-3645
After Hours: 303-370-9395

- Have the following information ready to give public health for each ill staff member or fill out employee illness log (see attached sample):
 - Illness onset date and time
 - Symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, fever, etc.)
 - Job title/duties (do they prepare any food, handle utensils, or garnish beverages?)
- Document any customer complaints related to illness after eating at your establishment. If possible, collect the names and phone numbers of any customers that have called you to report illness.
- Public Health will help you put control measures into place to reduce risk of illness at your establishment.

Control Measures

Public Health will help you put control measures into place but you can begin by:

Make sure staff:

- Report their illnesses to you.
- Wash their hands properly and frequently.
- Do not come to work or work at other food establishments if ill.
- Do not return to work until they have not thrown up or had diarrhea for at least 48 hours*.
- Wear appropriate protection (aprons, gloves, and goggles) when cleaning up feces or vomit (Follow instructions in attached 'Clean-up Procedures for Vomit/Diarrheal Accidents').

*Outbreak situations are more restrictive than the requirements for single cases of illness.

At your establishment:

- Throw out any food handled by an ill person.
- Clean all surfaces in the kitchen, dining room and bathrooms (doors, handles, counters, floors, etc.) with a bleach solution effective against norovirus. Combine 1 cup bleach with 1 gallon water; keep surfaces wet with bleach mix for 1 minute.
- Clean and disinfect all areas more frequently than usual moving from kitchen to dining area to bathrooms.
- If someone has an accident, evacuate the area and follow the attached 'Clean-up Procedures for Vomit/Diarrheal Accidents'.
- Change mop heads each time you prepare a new bucket of cleaning solution, or after cleaning areas contaminated with vomit or diarrhea.
- Launder soiled linens/clothing with detergent in hot water on maximum cycle length and machine dry on a high heat setting.
- Remove vomit/diarrhea from carpets/upholstery with a paper towel/rag and steam clean (158°F for 5 minutes or 212°F for 1 minute).
- Temporarily close if you don't have enough healthy staff to operate.



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

Clean-up Procedures for Vomit/ Diarrheal Accidents

Use this guide to clean up a vomit or fecal accident. By following the steps below, you can help reduce the risk of an outbreak in your establishment while protecting your employees involved in the cleanup.

Helpful hint:

✓ boxes as you clean →

Vomit and diarrhea spread viruses quickly

Accidents in retail food establishments can contaminate food, food preparation, and dining surfaces. Prevent additional illnesses by cleaning all surfaces quickly and thoroughly.



Did you know?

Most hand sanitizers don't work against norovirus and **CAN'T** be used instead of proper handwashing with soap and hot water.



You can use this document to meet the **2019 Colorado Food Code** requirements. Learn more at: www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/food-code-transition

Steps for cleaning up vomit and diarrheal accidents:

- Evacuate people from the area as soon as possible.
- Close the area, and cover accident with paper towels/rags.
- Wear disposable gloves, mask, and gown/coverall to avoid direct contact with the accident, or contaminated surfaces. Safety glasses and shoe covers may also be worn.
- Mix a disinfectant solution of one-cup household, non-scented bleach with 1-gallon water in a large bucket with a lid. This is a concentrated solution, handle with care. EPA's website lists alternative disinfectants under "[List G: EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective Against Norovirus](#)".
- Ensure the area is well ventilated (inhaling the bleach solution can cause irritation). If possible, open doors and windows to air out the room.
- Carefully remove paper towels/rags covering area and put in plastic trash bag.
- Use a spray bottle to spray bleach solution directly onto the accident, cover with paper towels/rags and allow the disinfectant to soak for 10 minutes.
- Wipe up the materials with paper towels/rags and put them into the trash bag.
- Spray the affected surfaces with the bleach solution again and wipe down with clean paper towels/rags. Place everything in the trash bag.
- Spray the bleach solution on the cleaned surface a third time and let air dry.
- Immediately discard any food or single-service items (straws, take-out containers, paper products, disposable utensils, etc.) that were near the accident.
- Carefully remove the disposable gloves, mask, and gown or coverall and place in trash bag. Dispose of safety glasses or spray with bleach solution and air dry.
- Place the trash bag into a second trash bag and take directly to the dumpster.
- Put on new disposable gloves and wipe down any commonly touched surfaces (doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, faucet handles, etc.) within 25-feet of the accident with the bleach solution.
- Dispose of any remaining disinfectant solution once finished.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- Wash hands after cleanup with soap and hot water, rubbing hands together for at least 20 seconds. **IF POSSIBLE TAKE A SHOWER AND CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES.**
- Document information on the ill person(s), including name, address, age, if they have traveled recently, and what they've eaten for the past 3 days.
- Complete an incident report. Include time, date and location of the incident, and cleanup procedures used. Keep the information on file for at least a year.
- Wash contaminated linens (towels, aprons, table cloths, etc.) in hot water with detergent and bleach and dry in a hot dryer. If you can't use bleach on linens, carpets or upholstery, find an alternative disinfectant against norovirus on EPA's website. It may be helpful to do a final steam clean.

Need additional information?

Visit CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>
Or contact your local health department or CDPHE at: 303-692-3645



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

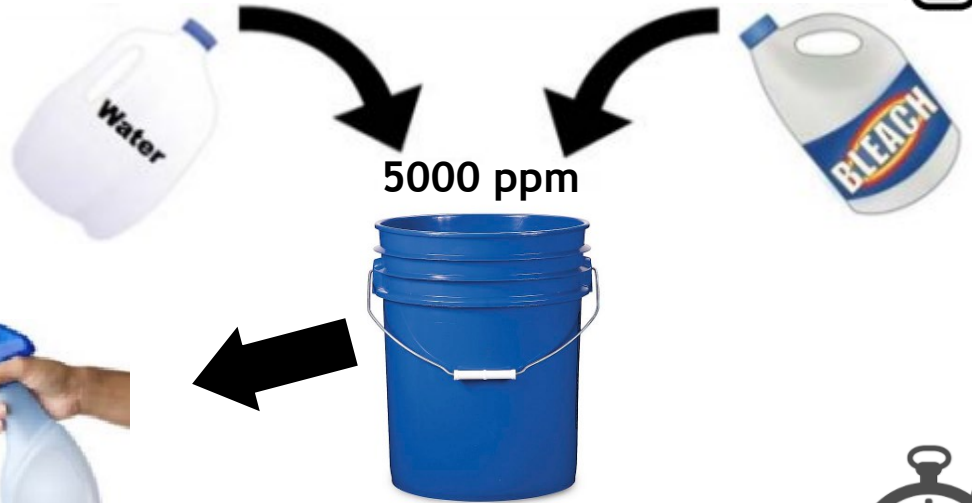
Norovirus disinfecting for surfaces contaminated with body fluids

Gather Supplies



1 gallon water

1 cup bleach



Cover and let sit **10 minutes**

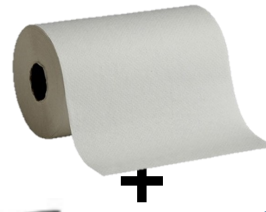


Food contact surfaces must then be washed, rinsed and sanitized



(Last step for non-food contact surfaces)

Let air dry



Need additional information?

Visit CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>
Or contact your local health department or CDPHE at: 303-692-3645



COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment



Employee Illness Log

Establishment: _____

Employee Name	Onset (date/time)	Symptoms* and Duration	Job Title/Duties	Name of Manager Illness Reported to and date	Does employee work at other RFE? (Y/N) If Yes, where?	Reported to Public Health? (Y/N and Date)	Date Placed on Exclusion/ Restriction	Date Removed from Exclusion/ Restriction
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							
	AM PM							

*Symptoms: V = Vomiting D = Diarrhea F = Fever (provide temperature) H = Headache O = Other (please list)
 N = Nausea M = Muscle Aches A = Abdominal Cramps C = Chills

Note: This form is a tool for facilities/businesses to use for tracking ill persons. Businesses should only complete this form if they suspect an outbreak is occurring. Please send to public health only if requested.

Additional forms are available at www.colorado.gov/cdphe/dehs