



**Public Health Department**

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## Health Advisory

To: Butte County School Districts

From: Andy Miller, M.D. (signed original on file)

Date: May 24, 2017

Re: Norovirus Prevention for Students and their Families/Caregivers

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The Butte County Public Health Department is informing all Butte County School Districts of continued reports of children from multiple schools being absent due to gastrointestinal (GI) illness. Similar to surrounding counties, this illness is likely caused by the Norovirus. **School Districts are encouraged to remind parents to keep ill children with GI symptoms home and to remain home for 48 hours after symptoms resolve.**

Norovirus is a highly contagious viral illness, often incorrectly referred to as “stomach flu”. The most common symptoms include a sudden onset of vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain, sometimes accompanied by a low fever. Norovirus is found in the stool and vomit of infected people. People can become infected by:

- Direct contact with an infected person’s vomit or stool,
- Eating food or drinking liquids contaminated with Norovirus, or
- Touching Norovirus contaminated surfaces or objects, and then putting their hands in their mouth.

There is no treatment or vaccine for Norovirus. Most people get better within 1-3 days. However, after symptoms go away people are still highly infectious, especially for the first 48 hours. **The most important steps to prevent the spread of Norovirus is to encourage routine handwashing and to stay home if sick, and for 48 hours after symptoms resolve.**

### Actions Requested

- Students should stay home if there is any sign of illness such as stomach pains, fever, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Stay home for 48 hours after symptoms resolve. Even if feeling better, people can continue to be contagious.
- Encourage consistent and correct hand washing (scrub for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap), especially after using the restroom and before eating or drinking. Hand sanitizer does not kill Norovirus.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces with a bleach-based household cleaner as directed on the product label.
- Wash contaminated clothing or linens immediately. Launder with detergent at the maximum cycle length and machine dry.
- Report symptoms of fever, nausea, vomiting diarrhea or stomach pain to the school nurse.
- Questions related to symptoms and treatment should be directed to a primary care provider or clinic.

For further information see the attached flier and visit the Butte County Public Health Department website at [www.buttecounty.net/publichealth](http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth) or the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).