

AMADOR COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Norovirus Outbreak in Amador County

A significant increase in acute nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea is being reported County-wide. Norovirus (a disease most commonly associated with cruise ship outbreaks) has been reported by private physicians, emergency rooms and local facilities in several individuals. Staff from Public Health and Environmental Health have investigated and provided direction and recommendations to facilities and establishments in the County that have been associated with multiple reports of illness.

This illness is spread by eating food or drinking liquids infected with norovirus or by touching contaminated surfaces. Outbreaks can happen to people of all ages and in a variety of settings. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne-disease outbreaks in the United States.

Symptoms of norovirus infection usually include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and stomach cramps. Other, less common symptoms may include low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and general sense of fatigue.

Though most individuals do not require medical attention and begin recovery within 1 to 2 days, norovirus illness can be serious in young children, the elderly, and people with other health conditions. Dehydration is a key concern. Symptoms of dehydration include a decrease in urination, a dry mouth and throat, and feeling dizzy when standing up. If you think you or someone you are caring for is severely dehydrated, contact your doctor's office.

In order to prevent the spread of norovirus wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water for 15 seconds, especially after using the toilet and always before eating or preparing food. Since a relatively small number of virus particles are capable of causing infection it is especially important to wash as thoroughly as possible. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. These alcohol-based products can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but they are not a substitute for washing with soap and water.

Food service workers who are experiencing these symptoms, as with any illness, should stay home, should not engage in food preparation or service while they are ill and should be especially diligent about handwashing after they are return to work.

For additional information, please contact Amador County Environmental Health at 223-6439.