



**Public Health Department** Danette York, MPH, Director  
David Canton, DO, MPH, JD, Health Officer, Interim

**Community Health Division – Communicable Diseases/Oroville**

202 Mira Loma Drive  
Oroville, California 95965

T: 530.552.3929  
F: 530.538.5387

[buttecounty.net/publichealth](http://buttecounty.net/publichealth)

## Health Advisory

To: Healthcare Providers, Long-Term Care Facilities and Schools

From: David Canton, DO, MPH, JD, Health Officer Interim (signed original on file)

Date: April 11, 2022

Re: Norovirus

---

**Norovirus is circulating in Butte County.** The Butte County Department of Public Health (BCPH) is currently investigating several outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness lasting 24-48 hrs in schools and long term care settings. Laboratory testing has confirmed norovirus infection as the cause of some of these outbreaks. Other counties in our region are reporting similar outbreaks in schools and long term care facilities and also identifying norovirus presence.

### What is Norovirus?

- Norovirus is a highly contagious viral illness that spreads easily in congregate settings and households.
- Norovirus illness is often incorrectly referred to as “stomach flu”, but is not related to the influenza virus.
- The most common symptoms include a sudden onset of gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, and stomach pain, sometimes with low fever.
- People can become infected by:
  - Having direct contact with an infected person
  - Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus,
  - Touching contaminated surfaces or objects, and then putting their hand in their mouth.
- Most people get better within 1-2 days.
- Norovirus can be serious for some people, especially the very young, the elderly, and people with other illnesses.
- Norovirus is found in the stool and vomit of infected people. People ill with Norovirus can transmit the virus to other people, especially while ill and in the first 48 hours after symptoms stop.

### How can Norovirus be prevented?

***The most important steps to prevent the spread of Norovirus are to:***

- ***Stay home if you are sick and for 48 hours after symptoms go away.***
- ***Wash your hands with soap and water***, especially after using the toilet or changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food. ***Hand sanitizer is not effective against Norovirus.***
- Avoid preparing food for others while ill and for 48 hours after symptoms go away.
- 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.

## Reporting

Schools and childcare providers should report suspected outbreaks of Norovirus to the Health Department as soon as possible in the following situations:

- 2 or more children in one classroom, or group of students (3 or more), with onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea on the same day, **or**
- Overall absences due to vomiting and/or diarrhea are double the expected amount over normal for that particular time of year.

Skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, shelters, and other congregate living settings should report suspected Norovirus outbreaks when 2 or more residents or staff have new onset of Norovirus-like symptoms. Vomiting may be present in at least half of the ill persons. Other symptoms may include nausea with or without vomiting and low grade fever.

Providers should report suspected outbreaks of Norovirus. Individual cases of Norovirus are not reportable.

For questions or guidance regarding this information, please contact the BCPH Infectious Disease program at (530) 552-3929.

## Resources

California Department of Public Health; [Norovirus](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [Norovirus](#)

Butte County Department of Public Health; [Report a Disease/Outbreak](#)

## Categories of urgency levels:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action