



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Protect Yourself from “Stomach Flu”

STANISLAUS COUNTY –The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency and Department of Environmental Resources are encouraging everyone to take additional steps to prevent the spread of a stomach virus. Outbreaks of gastro-intestinal illness have been recently reported in Stanislaus County. The illness is self-limiting and usually lasts 24-48 hours. Antibiotics are not necessary for treatment. The greatest risk is dehydration, especially for young children, persons with existing medical conditions, and the elderly.

“It is especially important to practice frequent and thorough hand washing, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers,” said Trudi Prevette, a Communicable Disease Nurse with the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency. “The transmission of this virus can be limited just by taking a few extra precautions in personal and environmental hygiene.” Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water is the best defense. Establishing routines that include washing and sanitizing contact surfaces every 4 hours with bleach solution will also reduce transmission of the virus.

The Norovirus agent is transmissible through: person-to-person contact, surfaces and food contaminated by a person infected with the virus, including but not limited to restaurants, cruise ships, nursing homes, schools, and family dinners.

Surfaces of interest are doors, tables, restroom sinks, and countertops where a multiple of people may touch. People who are sick with Norovirus illness will often vomit violently without warning, and the vomit is infectious; therefore, any surfaces near the vomit should be promptly cleaned and disinfected with bleach solution and then rinsed sufficiently.

It is imperative for food service workers and/or their close family members who are experiencing vomiting and diarrhea symptoms to stay at home and excuse themselves from work. Sonya Harrigfeld, Director of the Department of Environmental Resources, states, “Food Facility managers need to review illness policies with their employees and stress the importance in not reporting to work when ill.”

Wearing gloves and using utensils such as tongs when assembling ready to eat foods, as in salads that will not be cooked or heated prior to consumption, reduces the chances of these foods being contaminated with the virus.

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