



## MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Central Michigan District Health Department  
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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### Report to the Board of Health

January 25, 2012

Polio/Norovirus

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**Polio:** In 1964 there were two students in my eighth grade class with visible limb disability caused by polio they contracted ten years earlier. That same year everyone in my little town lined up in school gymnasium to receive a sugar cube with a drop of polio vaccine on the cube. In 1970 the last case of wild polio was reported in the United States. In 1972 the Western Hemisphere was declared polio free by the World Health Organization. Early this month the Indian Sub-Continent was declared polio free. We are so close to eliminating polio from the world. Pockets of wild polio remain in tribal area of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria. Rotary International has led Non-Governmental Organizations in efforts to provide funds to purchase and distribute polio vaccine.

**Norovirus** is an enteric pathogen. In plain English it is a virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. Humans are the only known reservoir. It is spread by the fecal-oral route and by aerosolized droplet from vomit plumes. Everyone is susceptible to infection by Norovirus. The incubation period is 24-36 hours. Symptoms range from mild abdominal achiness to vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms last for 24 to 72 hours. Treatment is simple fluid support. Occasionally some people will develop dehydration from prolonged vomiting and diarrhea. Intravenous fluid replacement will speed recovery if dehydration occurs.

Norovirus infections are often called the "24 hour flu". There is an important distinction between a "stomach flu" and influenza. Norovirus infection affects only the gut while influenza affects only the respiratory tract.

There are no vaccines against Norovirus. There are no antibiotic or antiviral medications to treat the infection. The best medicine is prevention.

Locally, a Norovirus-like outbreak occurred in the Mt. Pleasant area. On January 10, 2012 30 children with vomiting and diarrhea left one lower elementary school. On January 11, 2012 200 of 400 in the same school were absent. The superintendent of schools in consultation the Central Michigan District Health Department elected to cancel school and school related activities on January 12 and 13. The two extra days of no school plus the weekend plus the Martin Luther King Day observance created a five day interruption of face to face contact to hopefully stop the spread of the Norovirus.

Prevention methods as adopted from the Mayo Clinic

- **Wash your hands.** Thorough hand-washing, especially after using the toilet or changing a diaper, can reduce the risk of transmission.
- **Avoid contaminated food and water.** Don't eat shellfish that may have come from contaminated waters. Throw out any food that may have been prepared by someone who was sick.
- **Disinfect virus-contaminated areas.** Use a chlorine bleach solution. Where possible, allow bleach to stay on surfaces longer than 10 minutes.
- **Stay home from work.** This is especially important if you work in a food-handling job. You may be contagious as long as three days after your symptoms end.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.mayoclinic.com/health/norovirus/DS00942/DSECTION=prevention](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/norovirus/DS00942/DSECTION=prevention)