

THE CENTRAL KITCHEN



A publication of the Central Michigan District Health Department

Norovirus

Norovirus has been the number one cause of foodborne illness in Michigan for the last 3 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 20 million people get sick each year with Norovirus. It is very contagious and only a small amount of the virus is needed to make someone sick. The virus is passed from person to person through the fecal oral route. Restaurant owners need to be very vigilant when it comes to preventing Norovirus in their establishment.



Norovirus is commonly linked with ready-to-eat food, an ill food handler, or shellfish from contaminated

water. Norovirus can be transferred to food when an infected food handler touches food or equipment with poorly washed hands. Food handlers who are sick with Norovirus are a risk to others because they handle the food and drinks other people will ingest. Not handling food or food equipment while ill is key to preventing the spread of Norovirus.

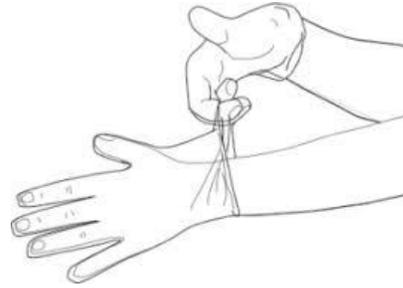
Symptoms of Norovirus usually appear within 24 to 48 hours after initial contact with the virus. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and abdominal pain; and can last 1-2 days. People infected with Norovirus can be contagious from the moment symptoms are shown until 3 days after recovery.

Employees who are experiencing Norovirus symptoms should be instructed not to come to work.

What should restaurants do when they have an employee who has been diagnosed with Norovirus?

Employers should notify their local Health Department. Employees must not come to work and must wait 48 hours after symptoms have ended before returning to work. For more information on Norovirus visit www.michiganfoodsafety.com then click on Consumer – Foodborne Disease.

Preventing Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Foods



Poor personal hygiene is one of the CDC's five major risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness in foodservice operations. CDC

states that the bare hands of food operators are the most common means of transmitting gastrointestinal viruses and bacteria to foods. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), handwashing does not result in hands free of bacteria and viruses, therefore, bare hand contact with ready-to-eat (RTE) foods is restricted in the 2009 FDA Food Code. Preventing bare hand contact is critical when handling ready-to-eat foods, which include cooked foods, salad greens, veggies, fresh fruits, breads, pastries, and any food that will not be washed or cooked further before consuming. After washing hands, an effective barrier should be used with these RTE foods, whether it be gloves, utensils, deli tissues, or anything that prevents bare hand contact with the food.

Food Safety Reminders

- Wash hands often!
- Don't handle ready to eat foods with bare hands.
- Cook foods to proper temperatures.
- Use a food thermometer!
- Keep hot foods HOT – 135 F or above.
- Keep cold foods COLD – 41 F or below.
- Keep foods out of the Danger Zone (between 41 F and 135 F)
- Wash, rinse and sanitize food contact surfaces regularly.

Temporary Food Licensing

Food preparation at a temporary location requires an additional license, regardless if the food is sold or given away. A temporary food service license application is available at your local health department office or on our web site at:

<https://www.cmdhd.org/temporary-food-events>. The local health department can provide resources and explain the requirements to operate a safe temporary food event.

Cell Phone Usage and Food Handling



It seems almost everyone owns a cellular phone today. Most people do not go anywhere without their phone in their hand or pocket. However, the food preparation area is a not place for cell phones. As health inspectors, we are seeing an abundance of

mobile phone usage in the workplace, particularly while handling food. A cell phone is an unnecessary and unsanitary item to be in a food preparation area. Cell phones should not be allowed in a food prep area, and food handlers should be practicing proper hand washing after handling their phones.

Recent studies have shown that over 7,000 different bacteria can be found on the surface of a mobile device. Many of those bacteria can cause disease and can survive on a cell phones surface. Scientists at the University of Arizona have found that cell phones can carry 10 times more bacteria than a toilet seat.

Food handlers must practice sanitary processes to avoid making the public you serve ill. Keeping unsanitary items, such as cell phones, out of food prep areas and practicing proper hand washing can aid in reducing the risk of introducing harmful bacteria to the food you are preparing. Following safe food handling practices in your facility can greatly reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Be safe and smart when handling cell phones and limit the use of cell phones to employee break areas.

A Note about CBD Oil and Marijuana



Since the passage of Proposal 1 in November 2018, there has been some confusion about the use of marijuana in food. Under current law, marijuana and products derived from marijuana cannot be added to food. THC, found in marijuana, and Cannabidiol (CBD) that can be derived from industrial hemp, are active ingredients in FDA approved drugs. According to the Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics Act it is illegal to introduce drug ingredients into food. Food service establishments cannot add marijuana or CBD to food. The 2009 FDA Food Code states:

3-101.11 Food shall be safe, unadulterated, and, as specified under 3-601.12, honestly presented.

3-302.14 Food shall be protected from contamination that may result from the addition of, as specified in 3-202.12, unsafe or unapproved food or color additives.

Food Safety Training

CMDHD offers ServSafe® instruction to help you comply with the Michigan Food Law. Remember, Food Establishments are required to employ *at least one* manager who has food protection certification. These certifications expire after 5 years and need to be renewed by passing a written test. View class schedules and applications on our website at <https://www.cmdhd.org/manager-trainingcertification>. Additional classes can be scheduled if needed.



In addition, we offer food worker training to groups for a nominal fee. This training provides food workers with basic food safety knowledge.



**Promoting Healthy Families,
Healthy Communities**