



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR
PRESCHOOLS, SCHOOLS AND DAYCARES**
Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 1413
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

Your assistance is requested in helping to stop the spread of viral gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-I-tis), commonly referred to as the “stomach flu”. Many other viral infections, such as the common cold, bronchitis, and influenza, are also causing high levels of illness at this time and the guidance recommended to prevent the “stomach flu” will also help prevent these other infections.

Every year, the Central Michigan District Health Department and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services receive reports from many different areas locally and throughout Michigan of people with a vomiting and diarrheal illness.

The “stomach flu” is very often caused by the germ Norovirus. Norovirus causes abdominal cramping, vomiting, and diarrhea. The symptoms last typically last 1 to 2 days. The time from exposure to the onset of symptoms is 24 to 28 hours. Norovirus is **extremely contagious** and spread by the fecal-oral route, which can occur easily by eating or drinking items that have become contaminated with norovirus, touching surfaces or objects with norovirus and then touching the mouth, or having direct contact with an infected person.

Schools, preschools and daycare facilities can contribute to the prevention of the spread of this viral-like gastroenteritis in several important ways.

- Frequent thorough hand washing with warm water and soap by staff and students.
- Promptly disinfecting contaminated surfaces with household chlorine bleach-based cleaners or an EPA registered disinfectant that kills Norovirus (please see the attached cleaning guidelines).
- Prompt handling (washing) of soiled clothing and linens.
- Avoiding food or water from sources that may be contaminated.
- Food Service employees should review safe food handling practices.
- Monitor staff closely for signs of the “stomach flu: Any employee that has had any vomiting and or diarrhea should not be allowed to work and should not be allowed to return to work for at least 2 days (48 hours) after the symptoms resolve.
- Monitored students closely for signs and promptly send home any ill child. As with staff, students should not be allowed back for at least 2 days (48 hours) after symptoms resolve.

It is very important to turn in your IP 10 reports (pink sheets) every Friday before 12 noon to your local health department branch office either electronically or by fax. Please be sure to specify the nature of the illnesses you are reporting. Be sure to differentiate between flu and gastro-intestinal illness.

We have placed some documents that you can include in newsletters to parents or in your Friday folder packets on our website. Please feel free to make as many copies as you wish. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your local branch office of the Central Michigan District Health Department or visit our website at www.cmdhd.org.

Sincerely,

Steve Hall, R.S., MS
Health Officer

Jennifer Morse, MD
Medical Director

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