



Press Release

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Public Health Officials Investigating Source of Prom Illnesses

Meanwhile practice these tips to avoid getting or transmitting a stomach bug like Norovirus

Oak Forest, IL – Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials are working with the Chicago Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of Public Health to determine what caused students from Victor J. Andrew High School in Tinley Park to develop symptoms consistent with acute gastroenteritis.

“It is unfortunate students became ill on what should have been a happy occasion,” said Demian Christiansen, DSc, MPH, director of the CCDPH Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit. “We want to reassure students and their families that we are working to find the source of the illness.”

“These investigations take time,” said Christiansen. “While the symptoms are consistent with norovirus, we are still trying to confirm what made students ill. We hope to have more information in the next couple days,” he said.

For most people, acute gastroenteritis symptoms usually resolve in 1 to 2 days. If parents or guardians have any concerns, they should contact their child’s health care provider.

Follow these tips to avoid getting or spreading stomach viruses, like norovirus:

- Practice proper hand hygiene – Wash hands carefully with soap and water; especially after using the toilet and changing diapers, and always before eating, preparing, or handling food.
- Wash fruits and vegetables and cook seafood thoroughly – Carefully wash fruits and vegetables before preparing and eating them. Cook all meats and seafood thoroughly before eating them.
- Students and faculty who are ill should stay home for 24 hours after symptoms have subsided. When you are sick, do not prepare food or care for others who are sick until at least 2 days after symptoms stop.
- After throwing up or having diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces, using a chlorine bleach solution or other EPA-approved product. Always follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or stool (feces).

Learn more:

For more information about norovirus in English and Spanish, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html>. For updates on this outbreak from Cook County Department of Public Health, visit www.cookcountypublichealth.org.

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