



Cowlitz County Health and Human Services

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Food Service Information for GI Illness (VGE) and Norovirus

Norovirus often causes gastroenteritis. Norovirus can infect anyone and is extremely contagious. Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and fever. Appropriate precautions for food handlers is especially important to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks and to reduce spread when an outbreak is suspected. The table below provides information on measures to take when there is concern for Norovirus or other GI Illness (VGE).

<p>Ill Food Service Workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person in charge (PIC) must exclude any food employee from working if any food employee is known to have current (or within 24 hours) symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or jaundice • The PIC shall cooperate and comply with orders from the local health officer • Employees with confirmed or suspected Norovirus must be excluded from work for a period of 24 hours after symptoms have ended and should be excluded for 48-72 hours after symptoms have ended
<p>Hand Washing for Food Service Workers</p>	<p>To properly wash hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash at a sink with hot and cold running water, soap, and paper towels • Rinse hands under clean, running warm water • Scrub hands for at least 10-15 seconds using soap • Dry hands with a clean paper towel • Turn off faucet handles with a paper towel • Hand washing should take at least 20 seconds <p>Food Service Workers must wash hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After using the restroom and then again upon entering the kitchen/food service area • After handling raw meat, fish, or poultry • After sneezing and/or coughing • Before and after food preparation • After bussing tables or touching dirty dishes; and then before unloading clean dishes • After taking a break, eating, or smoking • After using any chemicals • After any other contaminating contact • Hand sanitizers may be used after washing hands, but <i>not</i> instead of washing hands (hand sanitizers are not effective against norovirus).
<p>Food Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If short of staff due to an outbreak, have menus that require less preparation • Limit or restrict kitchen staff employees to the kitchen area only

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit or restrict access to the ice cube machines and store the ice scoop out of bin in a clean container • Discard any food that was exposed to an ill employee • Food workers must use utensils such as tongs, scoops, deli papers, or single use gloves to keep from touching ready-to-eat foods such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Washed produce that is eaten raw (E.g. sliced fruit, salads, garnishes) ○ Bakery or bread items (E.g. cakes, breads, pies, tortilla chips) ○ Food that has already been cooked (E.g. pizza, hamburgers, hot dogs, tacos) ○ Items that will not be cooked (E.g. sandwiches, deli salads, lettuce)
<p>Kitchen Cleaning Procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using Quat for sanitizing, put up a sign to stop use until the outbreak is over • Post signs at all Quat automatic dispensers • Clean potentially contaminated surfaces with soap and water and then sanitize with bleach solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use bleach at ½ to 1½ cup bleach in one gallon of water for all surfaces during the outbreak ○ Leave bleach solution on for at least ten minutes, rinse with water, allow to air dry ○ Explain to all staff the hazard of mixing ammonia (Windex or Quat) and bleach – if could create chlorine and/or ammonia gas • Dishwasher sanitizing – test the chlorine level 50 ppm or temperature gauge > 160 degrees Fahrenheit • Rolls carts/service carts should be sanitized before returning to kitchen area
<p>Important Rules for Using Gloves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees should wash hands before putting on gloves • Change gloves that get ripped • Change gloves that might be contaminated and wash hands before putting on new gloves • Never wash or reuse gloves • Change gloves and wash hands between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods • Throw gloves away after each use • Employees should wash hands after taking off gloves
<p>What to Do If an Employee Vomits in the Kitchen Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop all food preparation/service & Use Required Vomit and Diarrhea Clean-up Plan • Exclude employee that vomited immediately • Put on disposable gloves, goggles, and a mask • Mix 1 ½ cups regular strength bleach in one gallon of water • Apply absorbent material such as kitty litter to visible vomit and scoop into plastic bag and tie closed • Clean and then sanitize all items within a 25-foot radius of vomiting incident with bleach solution - 10 minute contact time.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rinse surfaces after disinfection• Discard all exposed/unwrapped foods and single services utensils within a 25-foot radius of the incident• Dispose of soiled paper towels and gloves in a plastic bag and place in outside garbage (if possible)• Wash hands with soap and water |
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