

Protecting your children from the norovirus outbreak in school

November 12 2010

A growing norovirus outbreak has made more 125 people sick at about two dozen schools in suburban Cook County. Noroviruses are highly contagious, and symptoms of illness include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps. Illnesses from noroviruses tend to come on suddenly and the victim may feel very sick. Most people recover within 1 to 2 days and should remain at home for 24 hours after symptoms have cleared.

“People can become infected with noroviruses by eating contaminated food, touching surfaces contaminated with norovirus or through direct person-to-person contact,” said Dr. Jorge Parada, director of infection control at Loyola University Health System. “Practicing basic personal hygiene like frequently washing your hands and not placing your fingers in your mouth or eyes are effective preventive measures to take against noroviruses, as well as against other infectious diseases like the flu.”

Other steps to take include:

- * Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- * Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- * Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be

contaminated with virus. Use hot water and soap.

* Flush or discard any human waste in the toilet and keep the surrounding area clean.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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