



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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NEWS

TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID VIRAL INFECTIONS

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO – During winter months, most attention is focused on preventing colds and flu. Hamilton County Public Health wants everyone to take precautions to avoid other viral infections that are also prevalent during this season.

Viral infections causing diarrhea and vomiting are a type of gastrointestinal illness – commonly referred to as stomach bugs – occurring frequently during winter months as people spend more time indoors and in close proximity with others.

Noroviruses, the most common cause of infectious gastrointestinal illness, are very contagious and spread easily from person to person. The virus is found in the stool and vomit of infected people. People can become infected in several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated by infected food preparers, touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then touching their mouth before hand washing, or having direct contact with another person who is infected and then touching their mouth before hand washing. People can also become infected if an ill person vomits nearby and the virus becomes airborne. Norovirus has been known to spread rapidly in nursing homes, daycare centers and cruise ships.

Symptoms typically include sudden onset of diarrhea and vomiting, which can be accompanied by nausea, fever, headache and fatigue. These infections are not usually serious and most people recover within one to two days. Dehydration can be a health risk, especially among the elderly, infants, and people with other illnesses.

Hamilton County Public Health recommends the following precautions to stay healthy:

Wash your hands thoroughly and often:

Hand washing is the single most important way to stop the spread of disease. Hands should be washed using soap and warm water. Scrub hands until a good lather is present then rinse and towel dry. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when hand washing facilities are unavailable.

Always wash hands:

- After using the toilet or changing diapers
- Before eating and preparing food
- Wash hands more often when someone in your home is sick

Avoid unnecessary close contact with ill persons

If someone is ill in your home increase frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, phones and light switches.

If you experience diarrhea and vomiting:

- Stay home from work, school, errands and other activities
- Increase fluid intake by consuming water, juices, sports drinks and broth-based soups
- Avoid preparing food for others while symptomatic and for three days after recovery

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