
"Partnering to promote, protect and preserve health in our community."

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK HEALTH DISTRICT 4

NOROVIRUS ALERT FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Central District Health Department Urges Medical Providers and Long-Term Care Facilities to Implement Infection Control Measures for Suspect Norovirus Patients

December 13, 2012

During the last two weeks, Central District Health Department (CDHD) confirmed one norovirus outbreak in a long-term care facility (LTCF) and received additional lab reports in individual patients. Schools in Ada County also reported an increase in vomiting students.

Norovirus is a highly contagious viral disease often spread by close contact with an ill person. Mode of transmission is typically fecal-oral; however, aerosol transmission can occur from vomitus.

Norovirus symptoms include a sudden onset of nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, often accompanied by low-grade fever. Duration of illness is typically 24-48 hours but may be longer in elderly or immune-compromised patients.

Testing for norovirus is not routine. If providers do choose to test, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing is available at out-of-state reference labs (ex. Quest/Focus, ARUP, Interpath, Labcorp, etc). Stool samples are preferred but vomitus is acceptable. Check with your lab for submission requirements. Idaho State Lab does not offer testing for individual patients.

Please consider norovirus if a patient presents with a sudden onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea, especially when they have been exposed to another person with similar symptoms. **Implement infection control measures immediately if norovirus is suspected, prior to definitive diagnosis.** Hospitals and long-term care facilities should consider posting notices on their doors asking ill visitors to stay away and remind ill staff to stay home.

For additional information contact the Office of Communicable Disease Control at 327-8625.

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