

Norovirus Clean-up Procedures

This issue of Foodfacts is focused on employee health and your responsibilities to insure that you are healthy enough to be working with food. In the event that you are ill while at work, steps must be taken to disinfect areas that may have been contaminated with vomitus or fecal material, especially if norovirus may be the agent causing the illness.

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause acute gastroenteritis in humans. The symptoms of norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cramping, and low-grade fever. Noroviruses are transmitted through the fecal-oral route, either by consumption of fecally contaminated food or water, direct person-to-person spread, or environmental contamination. It is highly recommended that **employees that have been ill with suspected norovirus should not return to work for a period of 48 hours after symptoms have ended.**

Specific Clean-up Procedures:

For cleaning spills of vomitus or stool, a two-step process should be used:

1. Visible/organic debris should be cleaned up with absorbent material (double layer) and discarded in a plastic bag to minimize aerosols and
2. Liberally disinfect area and objects surrounding the contamination with a chlorine solution (multiple applications may be required).

Chlorine solutions and use:

200ppm (parts per million)

- Use for stainless steel, food/mouth contact items
- 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1-gallon water (1:250 dilution)

1000ppm (parts per million)

- Use for non-porous surfaces, tile floors, counter-tops, sinks, toilets
- 1/3-cup bleach in 1-gallon water (1:50 dilution)

- Leave bleach on surface for 10-20 minutes, and then rinse with clean water.

For routine cleaning of non visibly soiled areas:

Use solutions listed above and clean doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, phones, counters, chairs, tables, hand rails, light switches and ice machines.

Reference: Local Health Department Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection of Norovirus, Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Department of Agriculture, May 2005