



# Nevada State Health Division Technical Bulletin

**Topic: Recommendations for Containment of Norovirus Outbreaks: New CDC Toolkit**  
**Section/Program/Contact: Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology/Pam Graber**  
**Date: February 27, 2012**

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## **TO: Nevada Residential Healthcare Facilities**

Norovirus outbreaks in residential healthcare facilities can become epidemic during winter and early spring. Norovirus is a virus that can cause severe and sudden gastroenteritis (inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines). Symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping and/or diarrhea. Norovirus is very easily transmitted through contaminated hands, equipment, surfaces, food or water.

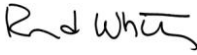
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidelines in 2011 and has recently released additional tools (e.g., fact sheet, case line listing, recommendations) for residential healthcare facilities to use for controlling norovirus outbreaks. The tool kit is available at [www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/norovirus.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/norovirus.html). Summarized key points for investigation and response to norovirus outbreaks include:

- Initiate investigations immediately;
- Promote good hand hygiene;
- Exclude ill staff in certain positions (e.g., food and patient-care workers) until 48-72 hours after symptom resolution;
- Isolate ill residents and patients until at least 48-72 hours after symptom resolution (NSHD recommends a minimum of 72 hours);
- Reinforce effective preventive controls and employee practices (e.g., no bare-hand contact with food, proper cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces);
- Disinfect potentially contaminated surfaces with the appropriate Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant;
- Collect stool specimens from at least five persons during the acute phase of the illness for diagnosis and report results to the Nevada State Health Division (NSHD);
- Report all outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis promptly to the NSHD at 775-684-5911. For reporting see [www.health.nv.gov/Epidemiology/MorbidityForm-interactive.pdf](http://www.health.nv.gov/Epidemiology/MorbidityForm-interactive.pdf).

In Nevada, residential healthcare facilities are urged to contact the Nevada State Health Division (NSHD) Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology (OPHIE) as soon as an outbreak is suspected at 775-684-5911. While individual cases of norovirus are not "reportable" per Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 441 A, outbreaks or suspected outbreaks (2 or more persons) **must** be reported. Immediate reporting leads to better outcomes. The role of NSHD is to assist in ending outbreaks as quickly as possible. NSHD provides expert advice about environmental cleaning, contact precautions and other outbreak and prevention assistance.

Signed:   
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