



Epi Watch

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Disease of the Month: Norovirus

What is Norovirus?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause diarrhea or vomiting in people. Anyone can become infected with these viruses.

What are the symptoms?

- Nausea,
- Vomiting,
- Diarrhea, and
- Stomach cramping.

People also experience a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. The illness is brief, with symptoms lasting only about one or two days.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually begin about 24 to 48 hours after exposure to the virus, but can appear as early as 12 hours.

Is there a treatment?

No specific treatment for norovirus infection is available. Oral re-hydration or intravenous fluids may be needed for severe cases.

How are norovirus infections spread?

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus;
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth;
- having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing

symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

How long is an infected person able to spread it?

People with norovirus infection can spread the virus from when they become ill to at least three days after symptoms stop and sometimes as long as two weeks.

Does a past infection make a person immune?

No. Because there are many different strains of norovirus, it makes it difficult for the person's body to develop immunity. Therefore, norovirus can recur throughout a person's lifetime.



Special Points of Interest

Did You Know?

Norovirus infection is not a reportable disease in Oklahoma, therefore the number of cases that occur each year is unknown.

TIPS: Preventing The Spread of Norovirus

You can decrease your chance of coming in contact with noroviruses by following these preventive steps:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toilet visits and changing diapers and before eating or preparing food.



- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Children with diarrhea should not attend day care until the diarrhea has stopped.
- Individuals with diarrhea who handle food should stay home from work until the diarrhea has stopped.

Inside this issue:

Disease of the Month: Norovirus	1
Tips: Preventing the Spread of Norovirus	1
Special Points of Interest	1
Current News	2
Reported Cases of Selected Diseases	2
Surveillance Report	2

CURRENT NEWS

The Oklahoma State Health Department has advised that there is Widespread Influenza Activity in Oklahoma. This week's surveillance findings indicate that an Influenza B strain is circulating that is not vaccine matched.

Antigenic characterization of isolates conducted by the OSDH Public Health Laboratory for the 2007-2008 Influenza Season indicate that although only a subset of influenza virus isolates from Oklahoma patients have been subtyped, all type B isolates are of a different strain than that included in this season's influenza vaccine. Therefore, consider influenza testing for patients presenting with influenza-like illness regardless of vaccination history.

Influenza has been confirmed in the Tulsa County area. As of February 2, 2008, there have been a total of 10 laboratory confirmed influenza cases: 6 influenza A and 4 influenza B. The best protection against the flu is practicing good hygiene and getting the flu vaccination.

The Tulsa Health Department collects Emergency Room chief complaint data to monitor the emergence of illnesses, such as influenza, in our community. For additional information on THD's county-wide surveillance system please [click here](#)

REPORTED CASES OF SELECTED DISEASES

Disease	Tulsa County		Oklahoma	
	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2008	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2008	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007
<i>Campylobacter</i>	7	2	24	20
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	0	0	0	1
<i>Giardia</i>	1	0	7	14
Hepatitis A	0	1	0	2
Hepatitis B	n/a	0	n/a	0
Hepatitis C	n/a	4	n/a	0
Rabies (Animal)	0	0	2	6
Salmonella	3	2	21	23
Shigella	2	1	10	3

Discrepancies between state and county numbers may result from cases being reported directly to the county. Also, Tulsa County totals for Hepatitis B includes perinatal cases.

Surveillance Report

