



# THD FOOD FOCUS

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOOD PROTECTION SERVICES

## Norovirus

Norovirus is a very contagious virus. You can get norovirus from an infected person, contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces. This virus causes your stomach and intestines or both to get inflamed (acute gastroenteritis). This leads to stomach pain, nausea, and diarrhea and vomiting. Other symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches. A person usually develops symptoms 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to norovirus and get better within 1 to 3 days.

Norovirus is the most common cause of foodborne-disease outbreak in the United States. Most of these outbreaks occur in food service settings. Infected food workers are frequently the source of the outbreak, often by touching ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands before serving them. However, any food served raw or handled after being cooked can get contaminated with norovirus. Norovirus outbreaks can also occur from foods such as oysters, fruits, and vegetables that are contaminated at their source, eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated

with norovirus, touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus from stool or vomit then putting your fingers in your mouth, or having contact with someone who is infected with norovirus.

Norovirus causes 19-21 million illnesses and contributes to 56,000-71,000 hospitalizations and 570-800 deaths. Anyone can be infected with norovirus and get sick. Norovirus illness can be serious, especially for young children and older adults. Norovirus can be found in your stool (feces) even before you start feeling sick. The virus can stay in your stool for 2 weeks or more after you feel better. You are most contagious when you are sick with and during the first few days after you recover.

Following safe food handling practices may prevent norovirus infection: practice proper hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water, wash fruits and vegetables before preparing, cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly before eating and when you are sick do not prepare food.

Source: [www.cdc.gov/norovirus](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus)

## Reminder – Waiver Test Available

The Waiver Test is comprehensive and intended for individuals that have knowledge in proper food safety practices. Please note that this testing process is performed without instruction or technical assistance. After passing the test, a food employee permit will be issued that will be valid for three years from the date of the test. Individuals that don't pass the Waiver Test on their first attempt will be given a retest card and be required to attend a regular THD food employee class before their retest card expires.

The Waiver Test is only offered once per month (please refer to the attached schedule).

## Activities For Six Month Period

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Food inspections conducted                               | 5,062  |
| Special Evets/Inspections                                | 111    |
| Food facilities opened                                   | 261    |
| Plans reviewed   | 123    |
| Food Safety Class Participants                           | 15,013 |
| Mangers Certifications                                   | 722    |
| Volunteer Workers Food Safety Class Participants         | 744    |
| Volunteer Workers Food Safety Class Participants On-line | 2,279  |

## Myth Buster

**Myth:**

Cross-contamination doesn't happen in the refrigerator – it's too cold in there for bacteria to survive!

**Fact:**

In fact, Listeria bacteria can grow at temperatures below 40°F. A recent study showed that the refrigerator produce compartment was one of the “germiest” places in the kitchen, containing Salmonella and Listeria.

To reduce the risk of cross-contamination in your refrigerator:

- Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs
- Clean up food and beverage spills immediately
- Clean and sanitize your refrigerator regularly

*Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education, www.fightbac.org, 2015*

## Visit Our Website

Have you visited our website lately? The Tulsa Health Department website has educational information such as the Food Employee class schedule, Manager Certification information, Food Code, study guides, and other helpful information that is available to view or download. You may also search for recent inspections of food service establishments. You can view other services and resources that are offered at the Tulsa Health Department. Go to [www.tulsa-health.org](http://www.tulsa-health.org) and click on Food Safety.

