

HEALTH ADVISORY: Increased Norovirus Activity in Benton County

April 10, 2026

Dear Community Partners,

Benton County is currently experiencing increased norovirus activity. While norovirus typically peaks during the winter months, we are seeing increased activity this spring.

Norovirus is highly contagious and can spread quickly, often leading to outbreaks. Symptoms may include sudden and intense vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, stomach cramping, headaches, and body aches. Most people recover within 1 to 3 days; however, dehydration can be a serious concern for young children, pregnant individuals, adults aged 65 and older, and those who are immunocompromised.

Norovirus prevention measures include:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
(Note: Hand sanitizer does not work well against norovirus.)
- Clean up and disinfect immediately after someone vomits or has diarrhea:
 - Wear gloves and a mask, if available
 - Wipe up vomit or diarrhea with paper towels, hot water, and soap, then place waste in a plastic trash bag
 - Disinfect the surfaces using a chlorine bleach solution
 - Leave the bleach on surfaces for at least 5 minutes
 - Wash all surfaces again with hot water and soap
 - Remove gloves, dispose of waste, and take out the trash
 - Wash any contaminated laundry with hot water and detergent
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Stay home from work or for at least 48 hours after symptoms have resolved

For additional guidance, please refer to the [Clean-Up and Disinfection for Norovirus](#) document.

Thank you for your continued partnership in protecting the health of our community.



Carolina Amador, MD, MPH

Public Health Officer



Sara Hartstein, MPH

Public Health Administrator

Clean-up and Disinfection for Norovirus ("Stomach Bug")

THESE DIRECTIONS SHOULD BE USED TO RESPOND TO ANY VOMITING OR DIARRHEA ACCIDENT

Note: Anything that has been in contact with vomit and diarrhea should be discarded or disinfected.

1 Clean up

- Remove vomit or diarrhea right away!**
 - Wearing protective clothing, such as disposable gloves, apron and/or mask, wipe up vomit or diarrhea with paper towels
 - Use kitty litter, baking soda or other absorbent material on carpets and upholstery to absorb liquid; do not vacuum material: pick up using paper towels
 - Dispose of paper towel/waste in a plastic trash bag or biohazard bag
- Use soapy water to wash surfaces that contacted vomit or diarrhea and all nearby high-touch surfaces, such as door knobs and toilet handles**
- Rinse thoroughly with plain water**
- Wipe dry with paper towels**





DON'T STOP HERE: GERMS CAN REMAIN ON SURFACES EVEN AFTER CLEANING!

2 Disinfect surfaces by applying a chlorine bleach solution

Steam cleaning may be preferable for carpets and upholstery. Chlorine bleach could permanently stain these.

a. Prepare a chlorine bleach solution

Make bleach solutions fresh daily; keep out of reach of children; never mix bleach solution with other cleaners

	IF HARD SURFACES ARE AFFECTED... e.g., non-porous surfaces, vinyl, ceramic tile, sealed counter-tops, sinks, toilets	
$\frac{1}{3}$ CUP BLEACH	+	1 GALLON WATER
CONCENTRATION ~1000 ppm		
IF USING CONCENTRATED BLEACH, DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF BLEACH TO 1/4 CUP.		
	IF POROUS SURFACES ARE AFFECTED... e.g., wooden floors or unsealed concrete or natural stone surfaces	
$1\frac{2}{3}$ CUP BLEACH	+	1 GALLON WATER
CONCENTRATION ~5000 ppm		
IF USING CONCENTRATED BLEACH, DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF BLEACH TO 1 CUP.		

- Air dry surfaces unlikely to have food or mouth contact**
or...
- Rinse all surfaces intended for food or mouth contact with plain water before use**

3 Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water

Hand sanitizers may not be effective against norovirus

Scientific experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) helped to develop this poster. For more information on norovirus prevention, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html>.



Facts about Norovirus

Norovirus is the leading cause of outbreaks of diarrhea and vomiting in the US, and it spreads quickly.

Norovirus spreads by contact with an infected person or by touching a contaminated surface or eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. Norovirus particles can even float through the air and then settle on surfaces, spreading contamination

Norovirus particles are extremely small and billions of them are in the stool and vomit of infected people.

Any vomit or diarrhea may contain norovirus and should be treated as though it does.

People can transfer norovirus to others for at least three days after being sick.

IF CLOTHING OR OTHER FABRICS ARE AFFECTED...

- Remove and wash all clothing or fabric that may have touched vomit or diarrhea
- Machine wash these items with detergent, hot water and **bleach** if recommended, choosing the longest wash cycle
- Machine dry



co.somerset.nj.us/health



FOOD SAFETY TRAINING
neha.org



WATER QUALITY & HEALTH COUNCIL
waterandhealth.org



americanchemistry.com



four.org

disinfect-for-health.org