

A Message from the Colorado Department of Health.

Widespread gastrointestinal illness has been reported throughout Colorado and Park County including in several local schools and child care centers. We encourage parents & Guardians to increase simple prevention measures to stop further spread in our community.

Symptoms of the illness include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. We believe the illness is being caused by a virus germ called "norovirus". Norovirus infection is very common this time of year. Symptoms usually last 1-3 days and can cause dehydration, which can be dangerous for children.

Stomach illness is easily spread to others when you have direct contact with another person who is infected, touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then placing your hand in your mouth, or eating food that has been contaminated by an ill person. This is especially a concern in a child care setting where there are young children in diapers, and children play together and share toys.

In order to reduce the spread of illness, Park County Public Health has recommended that any child with stomach illness be kept home, and that staff encourage frequent hand washing and careful cleaning of the facility.

Please help to keep you and your family well by:

- Keeping your child(ren) home from school or child care for at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.
- Washing your hands frequently, especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before preparing or eating food or touching your mouth.
- Helping your child learn how to properly wash hands.
- Not sharing food or drinks with others if you have symptoms.
- Flushing vomit or putting it in a toilet or trash can and making sure the surrounding area is kept clean and disinfected.
- Immediately cleaning any surface near where someone has vomited or had diarrhea and disinfecting the surfaces using a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.
- Immediately removing and washing clothing or linens soiled by vomit or diarrhea.

If your child becomes ill while at school or in child care, you or a guardian will need to pick them up as soon as possible. Your child should not return to school until 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped, even if they just have one episode of diarrhea or vomiting.