

# Outbreak of Norovirus-like Illness at a School

## Quick Reference Guide for Nurses and Administrators

### What is an outbreak of a norovirus-like illness?

When two or more students or staff are sick within 1-2 days of each other with the abrupt onset of vomiting **and** diarrhea.



### If an outbreak is suspected:

- 1** Report norovirus-like illness outbreaks to the Health Department 24/7 by using the [Online Outbreak Report Form](#) or calling 802-863-7240.
- 2** Send stool specimen kits home with 2-5 different sick students or staff. If your school doesn't have kits on hand, the Health Department will arrange getting them to you. The person collecting the sample works with the Health Department to send the stool specimen to the Health Department Laboratory.
- 3** Start a list of sick students and staff and track their symptoms.

### Take action to control the outbreak\*:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom, before eating, and after helping a student suspected or confirmed to have norovirus.
- Separate sick students from well students until they can go home.
- After someone vomits or has diarrhea, immediately clean then disinfect the area wearing rubber gloves and an apron, if available, and using a bleach solution or a solution approved by the EPA.
- Clean areas of greatest contamination and commonly touched surfaces three times a day.
- Consider sending a letter home to parents.
- Encourage students and staff who have symptoms to remain home for 24-72 hours after the symptoms have stopped.
- Students and staff who were sick shouldn't participate in water activities or swimming for one week after symptoms have stopped.

\*School closures are generally not necessary to control an outbreak.

**For more information:**  
**[healthvermont.gov/norovirus](https://healthvermont.gov/norovirus)**