

PINCONNING AREA SCHOOLS

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Michael J. Vieau
Superintendent of Schools

February 1, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We have become aware of a possible viral gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-I-tis) outbreak among students and staff at Pinconning Area Schools. We are working closely with the the Bay County Health Department in response to this increase in illness. We are also taking additional steps to increase cleaning of all hard surfaces in the school and buses.


Though several viruses can cause gastroenteritis, norovirus is the most common. All are easily transmitted through food, by person-to-person contact, or through contaminated surfaces. Therefore, take caution if one of your family members is affected because the virus spreads easily in the home as well. Norovirus is sometimes called the “stomach flu”, but is not related to influenza (the flu), which is a respiratory viral illness that causes fever, cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, runny nose, and sore throat.

Norovirus often causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. Symptoms may also include low-grade fever, headache, weakness, and muscle aches. Symptoms can begin as early as 12 hours after exposure to the virus or as late as 48 hours. The symptoms of norovirus usually last 1 to 2 days. In most cases, ill persons fully recover without medical attention. However, norovirus infection can result in hospitalization due mainly to dehydration, especially in the very young and elderly. Those with severe diarrhea should drink lots of liquids. Symptoms that are not seen with norovirus infection are bloody diarrhea or high fever. If these symptoms develop, we advise contacting your medical provider.

Children and staff exhibiting symptoms of viral gastroenteritis should be excluded from school or other group activities until 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped.

The best way to limit the spread of these viruses is frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm running water, being sure to completely clean all areas of hands and under fingernails. Preventing contamination of food, drinks, water, and ice is also very important. People who have been sick with norovirus-like symptoms should not prepare or serve food to others for at least 3 days after their symptoms are gone. It's important to know that most household cleaners are ineffective against norovirus and bleach is the only reliable means of disinfection. Please refer to the cleaning and disinfection guidelines on the back of this letter.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Vieau

Superintendent of Schools

Norovirus Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines

General Warning: Chlorine bleach is corrosive and irritating to mucosal tissue, skin, eyes and respiratory tract. Please read the label and follow all manufacturer's recommendations and warnings. Avoid spray bottle application and use only in a well-ventilated area. Chlorine bleach may damage fabrics and other surfaces. Please spot test an area before applying to a surface

Examples of items to disinfect:

Doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, commodes, bath rails, phones, counters, chairs (including backs), tables, hand rails, light switches, keyboards, etc. within a 25 foot radius of a vomiting incident. Steam clean carpets /upholstery and launder any clothes/linens contaminated with vomit or feces.

What works best: Chlorine bleach (regular, not splashless type). A new bottle of bleach should be used, if possible, as bleach may lose its effectiveness after being open for more than 30 days.

Chlorine bleach concentrations and mixing instructions:

- **For stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, toys**
- 1 Tablespoon of bleach in 1-gallon water

- **For non-porous surfaces, tile floors, counter-tops, sinks, toilets**
- 1/3-cup bleach in 1-gallon water

Specific Clean-up Procedures

1. Pre-clean any visible vomit or feces with disposable paper towel or other absorbent material and place in trash.
2. Disinfect area and objects surrounding where the vomiting or diarrhea occurred with the appropriate bleach dilution.
3. Seal and discard trash immediately

Hard surfaces

- Disinfect with appropriate bleach solution, rinse with water if food preparation area. A bucket of bleach solution and rag are suggested. Clean the least contaminated areas first, leaving the most contaminated areas for last.

Carpet / Upholstered Furniture

- Visible vomit or feces should be cleaned with disposable paper towel or other absorbent material and placed in the trash. Disinfecting with bleach may discolor carpet or upholstery – steam cleaning should be used.

Linens / clothing / textiles

- Visible vomit or feces should be carefully removed with disposable paper towel or other absorbent material and placed in the trash. Keep contaminated clothes/linens separated from uncontaminated laundry. Minimize the handling of soiled items and wash immediately. Wash items in a pre-wash cycle first, then use a regular wash cycle and detergent at the hottest setting safe for the fabrics. Dry separately from uncontaminated clothing at the highest temperature safe for the fabric.