



Guidelines for Responding to Vomiting and Diarrhea in Food Establishments

Norovirus is highly contagious. It only takes a few particles to infect a person. When someone with norovirus vomits, virus particles can spread up to 25 feet. To keep others from catching the virus, food service operators must contain the vomit and clean and disinfect the area.

Section 2-501.11 of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code requires food establishments to:

- Have written procedures for their employees to follow when cleaning up diarrhea and vomit
- Include in the written procedures how the food establishment protects customers, employees, food, and surfaces from contamination

All food service operators must:

- Have a written plan for addressing incidents of vomiting and diarrhea
- Restrict or exclude symptomatic employees for 48 hours after the last symptom (RI Food Code, section 2-201.12)
- Restrict or exclude any employee who is diagnosed with **norovirus**, even if they are asymptomatic (do not have symptoms), since they may carry the virus
- Make sure that:
 - » Employees wash hands
 - » Employees do not handle ready-to-eat foods with bare hands
 - » Ill workers are excluded or restricted
 - » Any food that was handled by an ill employee is discarded

Follow these guidelines for creating a written procedure:

Protect customers

- Move guests at least 25 feet away from affected areas
- Block access to contaminated area
- Throw away food and single service items that may have been contaminated

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Responding to Vomiting and Diarrhea in Food Establishments (*continued*)

Protect employees

- Require employees who are cleaning up to wear gloves, mask, and apron
- Throw away or launder items after use
- Wash hands thoroughly
 - » Remember: Hand sanitizers may **not** be effective against norovirus

Contain the spill

- Use baking soda or other absorbent material designed to contain the spill

Clean up

- Use paper towels for cleanup, and throw them away in a plastic trash or biohazard bag
 - » Do **not** vacuum (vacuuming can spread particles)
- Use soapy water for:
 - » Spill area
 - » Surfaces close to the spill
 - » Frequently touched areas such as faucet handles, door knobs, counters, and phones
- Rinse thoroughly
- Wipe dry with paper towels

Disinfect surfaces after cleaning (to remove remaining germs)

- Use chlorine bleach for everything except fabrics and rugs
 - » For **hard** surfaces use 1/3 cup bleach (1/4 cup if concentrated) + 1 gallon of water
 - » For **porous** surfaces use 1-2/3 cup bleach (1 cup if concentrated) + 1 gallon of water
- Steam clean or use other disinfectants approved for food service facilities for areas that cannot be bleached:
 - » Phenolic environmental disinfectants at 2-4 times the concentration
 - » EPA-registered disinfectants
- Rinse all food contact surfaces after disinfecting

To learn more, go to:

www.health.ri.gov/diseases/food/?parm=73

www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html

www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/causes/bacteriaviruses/norovirus/index.html



Cleanup checklist for vomiting and diarrhea

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Cleanup kit for vomiting and diarrhea

- Cleanup checklist
- Masks
- Gloves
- Paper towels
- Plastic garbage bags
- Caution tape
- Disposable clothes
- Baking soda
- Drop cloth

