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Protect Your Household from Viral Gastroenteritis (Stomach “flu”)

Viral gastroenteritis is sometimes called stomach “flu”, but it is not related to the flu. It commonly causes diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and stomach cramping. It is easily spread by eating food contaminated with vomit and diarrhea and through direct contact with surfaces and items that have been contaminated with vomit and diarrhea. This can include countertops, linens, hands, toys, etc.

Viral gastroenteritis is found in the vomit and stool (feces) of infected persons from the first day they feel sick. Infected persons are considered most contagious during the first 3 days of illness.

These important steps will help prevent the spread of viral gastroenteritis in your home:

Wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water

- Scrub your entire hands including under fingernails for at least 20 seconds (sing the Happy Birthday song twice).
- Use paper towels to dry your hands and throw them away in a trashcan.

Wash hands AFTER:	Wash hands BEFORE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the toilet • Cleaning up vomit or diarrhea • Handling soiled clothing or linens • Contact with a sick person • Changing diapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding your family • Preparing and serving food • Contact with a sick person

Wash laundry thoroughly

- Immediately remove and wash clothing and linens that may be contaminated with vomit or stool. Handle soiled items carefully to avoid spreading virus (use disposable gloves and gown/apron if available, and if not available, after cleaning up change clothes and wash them as well). Machine wash with detergent at the maximum available cycle length, then machine dry.

Routine Cleaning: Do More Often

Use a freshly prepared bleach solution (e.g., household chlorine bleach in a dilution of ¼ cup per gallon of water or 1 tablespoon per quart of water).

- Clean surfaces such as, hand rails, faucets, laundry baskets, floors, telephones, door handles, computers, TV remote controls, kitchen preparation surfaces, etc. Let surface air dry or rinse with water if food is made or eaten on surface.

Clean and disinfect surfaces contaminated with vomit and diarrhea right away

- A stronger cleaner should be used to clean up spills. Common wipes such as Clorox wipes do not have bleach, unless EPA registered.
- To make a cleaner with bleach, mix at least 1/2 cup bleach per gallon of water or 2 tablespoons per quart of water. This should be freshly made each day.
- Clean carpets and soft furnishings with hot water and detergent or steam clean. Temperature must be greater than 60°C (140° F) for disinfection. Dry vacuuming is not recommended.
- Use rubber or disposable gloves if available.
- Use paper towels or disposable rags. Cloth rags and sponges can spread viruses.
- Put contaminated materials into a plastic bag, tie the top shut, and place into the garbage right away.
- After cleaning up vomit, open windows and leave the room for a short time to clear the air.
- Do not share towels, facecloths, toothbrushes or other personal hygiene items.