

March 1, 2012

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 11-51
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: EDNA PRIMROSE
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Norovirus Information

1. Purpose. To inform Job Corps centers about prevention and treatment issues for students and staff regarding epidemic norovirus infections based upon the most recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
2. Background. Norovirus is a highly contagious illness often called by other names, such as viral gastroenteritis, stomach flu, and food poisoning. Norovirus is the most common cause of acute gastroenteritis in the United States. Anyone can get norovirus, and can have the illness multiple times during their lifetime.

Norovirus infection causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines; the most common symptoms are diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Norovirus can make people feel extremely ill, and have diarrhea or vomit several times a day. Most people get better within 1 to 2 days. Dehydration can be a problem among some people with norovirus infection, especially the very young, the elderly, and people with chronic illnesses.

Norovirus is highly contagious, and outbreaks are common due to the ease of transmission. People with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least 3 days and perhaps for as long as 2 weeks after recovery, making control of this illness even more difficult. Noroviruses are found in the stool and vomit of infected individuals.

People can become infected by: (1) eating food or drinking liquids contaminated with norovirus; (2) touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, then placing their hands in their mouths; or (3) having direct contact with an infected person.

Direct contact occurs when, for example, a caregiver is exposed to a norovirus carrier, or when an infected person shares food, drinks, or eating utensils.

3. Resources. For the most current information on norovirus infection, visit the following CDC websites:

Overview:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Norovirus/>

Key Facts:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus-keyfacts.htm>

Healthcare Settings:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/norovirus.html#a4>

Toolkit for Response to Outbreaks:

http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/norovirus/002_norovirus-toc.html

PowerPoint Presentation:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/norovirus/NoroVirus-Gen508.pdf>

4. Action.

a. **Education**

Job Corps centers are encouraged to share with students and staff the following tips for controlling the spread of norovirus on center:

- **Practice proper hand hygiene:** Wash hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and always before eating or preparing food. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers (containing at least 62 percent ethanol) may be a helpful addition to hand washing, but they are not a substitute for washing with soap and water.
- **Take care in the kitchen:** Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and cook shellfish thoroughly before eating.
- **Do not prepare food while infected:** People who are infected with norovirus should not prepare food for others while they have symptoms, and for 3 days after they recover from their illness.
- **Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces:** After an episode of illness, such as vomiting or diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces by using a bleach-based household cleaner as directed on the product label or a solution made by adding 5 to 25 tablespoons of household bleach to 1 gallon of water.

- **Wash laundry thoroughly:** Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or fecal matter. Handle soiled items carefully—without agitating them—to avoid spreading virus. Items should be laundered with detergent at the maximum available cycle length and then machine dried.

b. **Testing**

Centers should not stockpile diagnostic materials for testing stool specimens for norovirus, and should only conduct diagnostic testing based upon specific recommendations from the state or local health department.

c. **Treatment**

There are no specific drugs to treat people with norovirus illness. Rehydration is important for infected people—they must drink plenty of liquids to replace fluid lost through vomiting and diarrhea.

Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Carol Abnathy at (202) 693-3283 or abnathy.carol@dol.gov, or Johnetta Davis at (202) 693-8010 or davis.johnetta@dol.gov.