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**For more information, contact:**

**Sarah Schram, Health Director, 402-339-4334 x 6978, [sschram@sarpycasshealth.com](mailto:sschram@sarpycasshealth.com)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Sarpy/Cass Health Department recommends steps to protect against Norovirus**

Norovirus is a highly infectious virus that causes acute inflammation in the stomach and gastrointestinal tract. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 21 million people in the United States are infected with Norovirus each year. Norovirus is most commonly seen from November to April.

**Symptoms**

The most common symptoms of Norovirus are diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and stomach pain, but may include fever, headache, and body aches.

Symptoms generally develop within 12 to 48 hours after exposure. Symptoms typically resolve without treatment after 1 to 3 days in otherwise healthy persons.

**Transmission**

Norovirus is highly contagious and spreads primarily through direct person-to-person contact with infected people, indirect exposure via contaminated environmental surfaces, and contaminated food or water.

- Person-to-person transmission may occur directly through the fecal-oral route, ingestion of aerosolized vomit, or indirect exposure via contaminated environmental surfaces.
- Foodborne transmission may occur by contamination from infected food handlers during preparation and service.
- Water transmission may occur after well water becomes contaminated from septic tank leakage or sewage from breakdowns in chlorination of municipal systems.

**Treatment**

There is no specific medicine to treat Norovirus; however, drinking plenty of fluids may help prevent dehydration.

**Prevention**

Norovirus can spread quickly in closed places such as daycare centers, schools, and nursing homes. “You can help protect yourself and others by frequently washing your hands and staying home when you are ill,” says Sarah Schram, Health Director for the Sarpy/Cass Health Department.

The Sarpy/Cass Health Department offers these additional tips to help prevent the spread of Norovirus:

- Do not prepare food if you are ill with Norovirus or Norovirus symptoms for at least three days after you recover.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces with a household bleach solution of up to 1.5 cups of bleach in one gallon of water.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Wash hands with soap and water, scrub for at least 20 seconds, and rinse thoroughly.

For more information on Norovirus, please visit [www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org](http://www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org)