

TIPS FOR HELPING TO REDUCE NOROVIRUS RISK

Many different noroviruses exist. The terms “Norwalk” and “Norwalk-like viruses” may also be used, but they all refer to the same group of viruses. “Norwalk” is the term generally used on product labels. It is important to note that products with a claim against Norwalk are the appropriate products to use to help reduce the risk for norovirus and for incident clean-up.

You can help your business avoid the risk of a norovirus outbreak by being prepared. You'll be able to respond quickly to a possible incident if you:

- ▲ Have appropriate spill kits and other products on hand, including an EPA-registered disinfectant with a claim against Norwalk virus.
- ▲ Have personal protective equipment (PPE) on hand, such as disposable masks, gloves and aprons.
- ▲ Post handwashing signage and procedures to encourage good hand hygiene among employees and guests. Provide customer and employee access to hand antiseptics/sanitizers.
- ▲ Audit your products and procedures. Check expiration dates on product labels, and reinforce proper cleaning, sanitation and hygiene procedures with your employees.
- ▲ Consult with your local health department to find out what action will be required in the event of an incident or outbreak.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD HANDLERS

People working with food who are sick with norovirus gastroenteritis are a particular risk to others, because they handle the food and drinks other people will consume. A sick food handler can easily contaminate the food he or she is handling without knowing it. Many of those eating the contaminated food could become ill.

Many local and state health departments require that food handlers and preparers with gastroenteritis not work until two or three days after they feel better. In addition, because the virus continues to be present in the stool for as long as two to three weeks after the person feels better, strict handwashing after using the toilet and before handling food is important in preventing the spread of the virus. Food handlers who were recently sick can be given different duties so they do not have to handle food.

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