



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

-- PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY --

February 24, 2012

RE: Norovirus Activity in Marin County



Larry Meredith, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

Craig A. Lindquist, M.D., Ph.D.
INTERIM PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

899 Northgate Drive
Suite 104
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 4163 T
415 473 2326 F
415 473 3232 TTY
www.marincounty.org/hhs

Dear Colleague:

The number of reported outbreaks of self-limited acute gastroenteritis in Marin County has increased significantly since January 1st, 2012. Affected facilities include a variety of adult congregate living facilities, schools and a skilled nursing facility. All of the outbreak settings have ceased to have new reports of illnesses. When an outbreak ceases, surveillance for new cases continues for 10 days as a precautionary measure. The duration of most of the outbreaks was a few days to two weeks which reflects both the natural history of the illness and the effects of defensive control measures taken by the facilities. No new outbreak reports were received this week.

All of these reports suggest a more generalized or community outbreak of seasonal gastroenteritis. The community will be kept informed if there is a sudden increase or decline in the number of reported acute gastroenteritis outbreaks.

Marin Public Health Lab has confirmed that several of our recent outbreaks are related to Norovirus G2.1 and G2.4 infections. The spread, symptoms and resolution of all the reported outbreaks are consistent with Norovirus as well. As you know, the illness is abrupt in onset with symptoms of vomiting, cramps and diarrhea being the most common. Most symptoms resolve within 48-72 hours while viral shedding in stools may continue for 1-2 weeks. The key elements of prevention and control of Norovirus outbreaks are meticulous attention to hand hygiene, isolation of symptomatic patients or staff and decontamination of objects that have been exposed to fecal matter or vomitus. The following link contains greater information about Norovirus and may serve as a patient handout in your practices:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/norovirus.pdf>

The Marin County Public Health staff are available and prepared to assist you in evaluating or responding to outbreaks in our community. Please feel free to contact them by calling 415-473-4163. I will send additional information to you as warranted by our local surveillance data.

Sincerely,
Craig Lindquist, MD, PhD
Interim Public Health Officer

Mirta Cuevas, RN, BSN
Senior Public Health Nurse

Shanna Cronan, RN, BSN
Senior Public Health Nurse