



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

June 5, 2015

Outbreak of Probable Gastroenteritis – Bel Aire Elementary School

Grant Nash Colfax, MD
DIRECTOR

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

3240 Kerner Boulevard
San Rafael, CA 94901
415 473 4163 T
415 473 2326 F
415 473 3232 TTY
www.marincounty.org/hhs

Dear Colleagues:

Situation

This morning, a gastrointestinal illness outbreak at Bel Aire Elementary School in Tiburon was reported to the Public Health Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Team. The school reports approximately 90 students primarily in the fifth grade and one teacher with vomiting and diarrhea. These cases may be linked through a common exposure to a food served at the school on June 3, 2015. A notice has been sent to the parents that may generate calls or visits to clinicians.

Actions Requested of Clinicians

While the cause has not been confirmed, this outbreak is consistent with norovirus or other gastrointestinal virus. In patients reporting vomiting and diarrhea, please consider norovirus PCR stool testing and report any positive results to the Health Department.

Clinical Presentation

Norovirus gastroenteritis is abrupt in onset with symptoms of vomiting, cramps and watery diarrhea being the most common. Dehydration is the most serious clinical concern. Most symptoms resolve within 48-72 hours.

Prevention and Control

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 duration of most norovirus outbreaks is a few days to two weeks.

Transmission

Norovirus is spread through direct contact with diarrhea and vomit, and indirectly through contact with contaminated materials. Secondary cases within the household are not uncommon. The provider community will be kept informed if there is a sudden increase or decline in the number of reported acute gastroenteritis cases.

Reporting

Marin County Public Health staff are available and prepared to assist in evaluating or responding to outbreaks in our community. Please feel free to contact them by calling 415-473-4163.

Additional Information

We will send additional information to you as warranted as the situation unfolds.

More information can be found at

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/Pages/Norovirus.aspx>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Willis', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matthew D. Willis, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer