

# Food Safety eNews

[www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety](http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety)

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## Norovirus Update

### What is Norovirus?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses (previously known as Norwalk-virus) that can cause gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in Minnesota. This infection is often mistakenly referred to as the “stomach flu” - it is not related to the flu (influenza), which is a common respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus.

### What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of norovirus infection include vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. Less common symptoms can include low-grade fever or chills, headache, and muscle aches. Symptoms usually begin 1 or 2 days after ingesting the virus, but may appear as early as 12 hours after exposure. The illness often comes on suddenly.

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**NEW**

## Online Renewal Modules Added

As a Certified Food Manager you need to renew your certification every three years by obtaining four hours of continuing education. There are two ways you can complete the necessary four hours of training:

- Attend one of our face-to-face classes (see class schedule on page 2)
- OR
- Go online:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety/components/serveitupsafely.htm>

and personalize your renewal. That’s right—when you go online to take the course, you will choose the four modules that are most useful for you and your establishment. Here are the eight modules you can choose from:

1. **Cleaning and Sanitizing—Basics:** learn the basics of cleaning and sanitizing. Managers renewing for the first time will find this module useful.
2. **Cleaning and Sanitizing—Advanced:** Take a deeper look at issues related to cleaning and sanitizing. Long-time food managers will find this module useful.
3. **Cooling Principles:** Find out about proper methods for cooling foods by working through scenarios based on actual cases of foodborne illness in Minnesota.
4. **Emerging Trends I:** Learn about food allergens, crisis management, catering, and food irradiation.
5. **Emerging Trends II:** Learn about reduced oxygen packaging (ROP) and HACCP.
6. **Personal Hygiene:** View basic information about the importance of personal hygiene in reducing the risks of contamination.
7. **Preventing Foodborne Illness:** Learn the basics of preventing foodborne illness through correct food handling methods.
8. **Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Foods:** Find out about the special needs of ready-to-eat (RTE) foods and determine the responsibility of the person-in-charge.

### Quotes from online participants:

**“I felt the course was well organized and easy to navigate through. The interactive screens coupled with the case studies were very informative.”**

**“I would highly recommend this course for the learning experience and for the convenience of taking the course from your home or work.”**

## **Norovirus Update continued**

### **How is it spread?**

Noroviruses are found in the stool (feces) or vomit of infected people. People can become ill from a remarkably small amount of these viruses. Research shows that it only takes 10 to 100 norovirus viral particles to make someone ill. By comparison, one gram of feces can contain up to 10,000,000 viral particles and one projectile vomiting incident can potentially contaminate the environment with 30,000,000 viral particles.

The virus can be spread by foodborne, airborne, person-to-person, and environment-to-person transmission. Every food service operation must make an extra commitment to reduce the spread of viruses.

### **How well are you doing?**

Assess your risks in a few clicks. Get actionable recommendations for your establishment by taking the complimentary Food Safety Assessment sponsored by National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation at [www.ServSafe.com/assess](http://www.ServSafe.com/assess)

## **How can norovirus infection be PREVENTED?**

**1.**

The KEY to preventing the spread of norovirus is proper handwashing. Every foodhandler on every shift must be trained in proper handwashing procedures. For more details on handwashing, click on the following link:

[www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/index.html)

**2.**

Train all employees to report symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea and to stay away from work. Use your Employee Illness Log to document all cases of vomiting and diarrhea. To print a copy of the log, click on the following link:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety/components/foodservice.htm>

**3.**

As a Certified Food Manager it is your responsibility to help employees understand and follow proper handwashing and illness reporting policies. Make a positive difference by setting a good example.

Reference: Minnesota Department of Health (2005) *Norovirus*. Retrieved December 18, 2007 from <http://www.health.state.mn.us>

## **Class Schedule: Spring 2008**

### **ServSafe Certification**

- Little Falls, January 8
- Marshall, January 22
- Moorhead, February 5
- Rochester, February 28
- Bemidji, March 5
- St. Paul, March 20
- Mankato, March 27
- Alexandria, April 23
- Worthington, May 6
- St. Cloud, May 13
- Thief River Falls, May 15 & 16
- Farmington, June 10
- Grand Rapids, June 12

### **Renewal**

- Little Falls, January 8
- Marshall, January 23
- Moorhead, February 5
- Rochester, February 28
- Bemidji, March 5
- St. Paul, March 20
- Mankato, March 27
- Alexandria, April 23
- Worthington, May 5
- St. Cloud, May 14
- Thief River Falls, May 14
- Farmington, June 10
- Grand Rapids, June 12

For more class information: [www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety](http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety) or (507)337-2819 or [schwa047@umn.edu](mailto:schwa047@umn.edu)