February 27, 2026

ADVISORY

Suspected Norovirus Outbreak

This health advisory is sent to primary care providers, urgent care, emergency departments and infection preventionists at acute and long-term care facilities.

Key Message:

- TCPH is working with the Eagle Mountain Saginaw Independent School District in a suspected norovirus outbreak at Creekview Middle School.
- With increased community activity other outbreaks may occur in groups settings like schools, shelters, childcare, hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Situational Summary

Background

Norovirus is a very contagious virus in the Caliciviridae family that causes acute gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines leading to "stomach flu–type" symptoms. It spreads easily through the fecal–oral route via contaminated food or water, direct contact with an infected person, contact with vomitus, or touching contaminated surfaces and then the mouth. The most common symptoms are sudden onset of vomiting, watery diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain or cramps, often accompanied by mild fever, headache, and body aches. Symptoms typically start 10–50 hours, usually 1-2 days after exposure and last about 1–3 days in otherwise healthy people. Illness is normally self-limited, but profuse vomiting and diarrhea can lead to dehydration, which can be serious for young children, older adults, and people with underlying conditions or weakened immune systems. Norovirus infections occur frequently in closed or crowded settings such as schools, childcare centers, long term care facilities, hospitals, and cruise ships, where person-to-person spread and environmental contamination can drive outbreaks. People can continue to shed virus in stool for days to weeks after they feel better, which helps explain why outbreaks can be prolonged without strict hygiene and environmental cleaning.

Situation

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) is investigating a suspected norovirus outbreak at Creekview Middle School in Eagle Mountain–Saginaw ISD. The clinical presentation and abrupt onset are consistent with norovirus and align with commonly used Kaplan criteria for probable norovirus outbreaks. On February 25, 2026, Eagle Mountain–Saginaw Independent School District notified TCPH of many students experiencing acute gastrointestinal illness at Creekview Middle School. Current reported symptoms include 108 students with vomiting, 46 with nausea, 7 with diarrhea, 15 with stomachache, and only 1 with fever (categories are not mutually exclusive). This pattern is highly consistent with norovirus, which typically presents with sudden onset vomiting, limited fever, and short-duration illness.

Recommendation

Primary care providers, urgent care centers and some emergency departments may see an increase in gastrointestinal illness from Creekview students and family members.

- Evaluate symptomatic students for acute gastroenteritis and test as clinically indicated.
- If you see a student from the middle school and test for Norovirus, please provide TCPH with results both positive and negative, when they become available via https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/diseasereport or fax (817)850-2366.
- Reinforce standard infection prevention measures with patients and families (e.g., handwashing with soap and water, home isolation while symptomatic, surface disinfection).

During increased community activity long term care facilities are at higher risk for outbreaks, which can be serious for facility residents.

- Focus on rapid identification, strict infection control, and protection of residents and staff.
- Place symptomatic residents on Contact Precautions (gown and gloves on every room entry) for at least 48 hours after symptoms are resolved.
- Assign dedicated staff to ill residents to limit spread within the facility.
- Exclude ill staff (including food handlers) from work until at least 48 hours after symptoms stop and minimize staff movement between affected and unaffected units or between facilities.
- Hand hygiene and environmental cleaning: Alcohol-based hand rubs are less effective against norovirus, therefore emphasize handwashing with soap and water, especially after using the restroom, changing incontinence products, and before eating or handling food.
- Refer to the one page of key infection control points from CDC (https://www.cdc.gov/healthcare-associated-infections/media/pdfs/Norovirus-ControlRecomm-508.pdf)

Outbreaks of Norovirus are reportable to Tarrant County Public Health and should be reported by phone to the Epidemiology Division (817)321-5350 option #4.

Selected References:

CDC – Norovirus: About Norovirus. Updated June 2, 2024.URL: https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/index.html

CDC – Norovirus: Facts and Stats Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Norovirus: Facts and Stats. Updated June 2, 2024. URL: https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/data-research/index.html

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CDC – Norovirus Reporting and Surveillance Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Norovirus Reporting and Surveillance. Updated January 12, 2025.URL: https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/php/reporting/index.html

Karst SM, et al. Norovirus: An Overview of Virology and Preventative Measures. Viruses. 2022;14(1):40. URL: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9781483/

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StatPearls – Norovirus Hall AJ, Vinjé J. Norovirus. In: Stat Pearls [Internet]. Updated February 16, 2025. URL: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK513265/

Texas DSHS – Norovirus Outbreaks: Investigation and Control Guidance Texas Department of State Health Services. Norovirus Outbreaks – Investigation and Control Guidance. https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/IDCU/investigation/electronic/EAIDG/2022/Norovirus-Outbreaks.pdf

CDPH – Norovirus Toolkit for School and Childcare Center Outbreaks California Department of Public Health. Norovirus Toolkit for School and Childcare Center Outbreaks. URL: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Norovirus-School-Toolkit.pdf

	Alert:	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention
	Advisory:	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
	Update:	Provides update information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
	Information:	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

R. Jones, M. Lueke, E. Ellis, P. Nweke