

Food Facts

NEWSLETTER

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Environmental Health Division

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Foodfacts is designed to keep food employees, chefs, managers, and owners informed, connected, and engaged about current food safety news.



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Norovirus Has Arrived

Recently Dane County has investigated the first **Norovirus** outbreak of the season. **Norovirus** is a highly contagious foodborne illness that is spread very easily through food and is one of the leading causes of illness from contaminated food in the United States. Anyone that works with food should know about the virus.

Symptoms of Norovirus include:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Body aches and headaches

Food employees with these symptoms must stay home from work for 48 after their last bout of diarrhea and vomiting.

For more information, watch this [Norovirus Video](#)

Lessons Learned from Recent Outbreak

The recent outbreak was a reminder of the importance of the following:

- Excluding ill employees until they are **48 hours** symptom free according to the current Wisconsin Food Code. This means when they call in sick, they cannot return to work for **at least 3 days**.
- If someone gets sick at your

establishment, proper cleanup is important to prevent the spread of Norovirus. **Bleach is best** as quaternary ammonia sanitizer requires a longer contact time to be effective.

- Don't forget the front of the house. **Bartenders and hosts can also spread Norovirus!**
- Food employees must report if they have been **exposed through living with someone** that has been diagnosed with a foodborne illness.

Hand Washing Reminder

One of the easiest times to forget to **wash your hands** is after handling dirty dishes. Dirty dishes can be contaminated with bacteria and viruses that could make other people sick. Employees that wash dishes and clear tables must wash their hands after handling dirty dishes, before they touch anything else. If dishes are contaminated with **Norovirus** and a server does not wash their hands after clearing the table, what happens? If the person doing dishes does not wash their hands after loading the dish machine with the contaminated dish and then unloads the clean dishes, what happens? Those people could spread **Norovirus** to the surfaces they touch. Customers and employees touching those surfaces could get sick too.

Keep your customers and coworkers safe by washing your hands after touching dirty dishes.

Check out

[*CDC's Preventing Norovirus Outbreaks*](#)

Prevent Norovirus at your Business...

- Keep ill employees home by training all staff using the [*Employee Illness Reporting Agreement*](#)
- [*Tracking Illnesses*](#)
- Clean up properly when someone gets sick using these [*CDC recommendations*](#)

