



Establishments are reminded to follow proper food safety practices

An Update on Norovirus Outbreaks in Michigan

Although summer is not the typical norovirus season, Michigan is currently experiencing a higher than usual number of confirmed and/or suspected norovirus outbreaks. The Michigan departments of Agriculture (MDA) and Community Health (MDCH) reminds both food regulators and food industry managers to practice norovirus preventive tactics as required by the Michigan Food Law of 2000. Food managers should talk with their employees to ensure knowledge and consistent practice of the following food safety steps:

- Having an informed person in charge of retail food operations (Part 2-1)
- Preventing sick employees from working (Part 2-2)
- Ensuring employees wash their hands (Part 2-301)
- Preventing bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods (Part 3-301.11)
- Keeping food contact surfaces clean and sanitized (4-601 & 702)

Norovirus outbreaks can occur anywhere people come together - social events/parties, schools, summer camps, daycare centers, restaurants, healthcare facilities, etc. It's highly contagious and causes symptoms that include vomiting, diarrhea and nausea. It can be easily transmitted when sick people contaminate food, water, surfaces or objects and by person-to-person contact. An infected person can shed the virus in their stool for up to two weeks.

It is important to remember that norovirus is resistant to most sanitizers (including QUATS) and can survive on surfaces for long periods of time unless thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. If an employee or customer vomits or experiences diarrhea in a food establishment, food managers should follow recommended cleanup procedures that will kill norovirus, which can be found online at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Guidelines_for_Environmental_Cleaning_125846_7.pdf

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/foodsafety, www.foodsafety.gov, www.fightbac.org, or call the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry at 800-535-4555, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at 888-SAFE-FOOD, or contact your local health department environmental health or communicable disease division.