

Diarrhea Toolkit

Information for Child Care Providers



CLEAN!

Cleaning means using soap and water to remove dirt and debris and then killing the germs that are on objects using a disinfectant such as bleach.



EXCLUDE!

Sick kids and staff can spread illness to others. Make sure sick kids and staff are kept home, and send kids and staff home if they start having symptoms while in your care.

REPORT!

We are here to help you!
Report to us if:

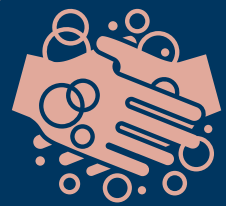
1. You see an increase in the number of kids with vomiting or diarrhea
2. A child in your care is diagnosed with a reportable germ like:

- *Shigella*
- *E. coli*
- *Giardia*
- *Cryptosporidium*
- *Salmonella*



WASH YOUR HANDS!

Handwashing is the best way to stop germs from spreading. Make sure kids and staff are washing hands with soap and water regularly throughout the day.



There's no such thing as "Stomach Flu"

"Stomach Flu" could be caused by a number of different germs, some of which can be serious! An increase in the number of kids or staff with vomiting or diarrhea is cause for concern. These germs are spread by fecal-oral transmission, not through the air. This means if "a bug is going around," people are getting sick peoples' feces or vomit in their mouths!



Greetings from the Minnesota Department of Health Foodborne, Waterborne, and Zoonotic Diseases Units!

WHO WE ARE

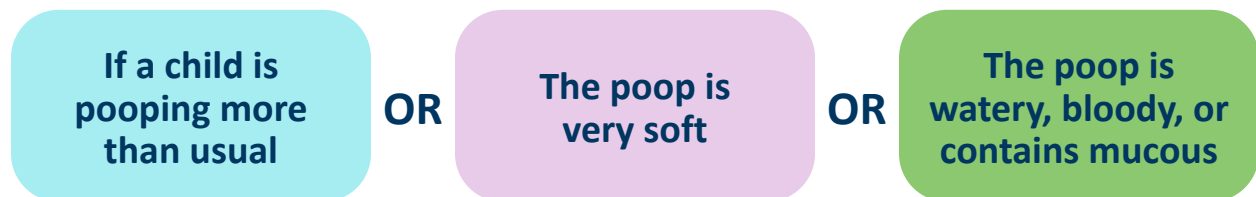
We work at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in the Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention, and Control Division. We are separate from the group that provides child care licenses and inspects child care settings for compliance with regulations, though we work together to ensure you have the most accurate and up-to-date information to provide a safe and healthy place for the kids in your care.

WHAT WE DO

We investigate outbreaks of diseases spread by food, water, and animals (including people!) to find out the source and prevent more people from getting sick. Many of the diseases we work with cause diarrhea and vomiting. We can help you stop illnesses from spreading in your child care, provide guidance on what cleaning protocols to use, and provide you with the tools you need to keep everyone in your care safe and healthy.

We use the information we collect from people involved in an outbreak to track disease trends across the state and nationally. These data can help us prevent outbreaks in the future.

WHAT IS DIARRHEA?



Many things can cause diarrhea. Because it can be hard to tell what is causing it, kids with diarrhea should stay home from child care/preschool for at least 24 hours after their diarrhea has stopped.

Germs that Cause Diarrhea/Vomiting

WHAT CAN MAKE KIDS AND STAFF SICK?

Many different types of germs can make people sick with vomiting and diarrhea, including viruses, bacteria, and parasites. Diarrhea and vomiting are often contagious; someone who has (or recently had) vomiting or diarrhea can spread it to others.

HOW DO GERMS THAT CAUSE DIARRHEA SPREAD?

Germs are in the poop and vomit of people who are sick. If the germs (from invisible amounts of poop) get into another person's mouth, they can get sick, too. This is called "fecal-oral transmission." These germs can get on hands, toys, or other objects that might be touched. Diseases that cause diarrhea or vomiting are also spread easily through water, like in pools and water tables. All animals, even healthy ones, can have germs in their poop that can make people sick.



People can have germs in their poop and vomit (often called "shedding") even after they are feeling better. It is important to continue to be careful and follow the prevention tips on the next page (e.g., wash hands well with soap and water) even after the child or staff returns to child care.

WHAT SYMPTOMS SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

Infections from **bacteria** like *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* are most common in summer. These are spread easily between people, from animals, or through eating contaminated food. Other bacterial outbreaks do not have a seasonality, like those caused by *Shigella*. Bacterial infections can cause diarrhea, fever, bloody diarrhea, and, sometimes, vomiting. Symptoms tend to last about a week.

Parasites usually cause outbreaks in late summer and early fall. These are spread easily between people, in water like pools, lakes, and sensory tables, and from animals. They generally cause watery diarrhea that can last for over a week, and it can take up to a couple weeks for someone who was exposed to get sick. Parasites that can cause diarrhea include *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*.

Viruses (like norovirus and rotavirus) often cause outbreaks in the winter and spring. These viruses generally cause 1-2 days of vomiting and diarrhea and are spread very easily person-to-person, especially when someone vomits in a public space.



Luckily, most people recover fully from a vomiting/diarrhea illness. However, sometimes kids or staff can get really sick (for some germs, 25% or more of people are hospitalized) and rarely there are deaths reported. That's why it's so important to follow exclusion and illness prevention guidelines.

Keeping Everyone Healthy - 1

To prevent the spread of germs, follow these tips every day to keep kids and staff healthy.

HANDWASHING

Handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent diarrheal illnesses. Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Hands should always be washed after changing diapers or using the restroom, before preparing or eating food, and after contact with any animals. Hand sanitizer doesn't work against norovirus and the parasite *Cryptosporidium*. If younger kids can't wash their hands well, make sure you help!

CLEANING

Cleaning methods depend on the germ that's making people sick, but in general, you need to wash a surface with soap and water then use a disinfectant like bleach. Don't vacuum vomit or diarrhea! (Use the procedure in **RESOURCES**.) When you report outbreaks or reportable diseases to us, we can tell you which disinfectant will work best.

WATER

Many pathogens spread easily in water.

Kids who are experiencing vomiting/diarrhea should not swim or play with water tables until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. Additional water restrictions apply for certain pathogens.

EXCLUSIONS

Excluding ill kids or staff is very important to stop the spread of disease.

Anyone with vomiting or diarrhea should be excluded from child care (i.e., not attend) until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. This includes excluding yourself if necessary; providers and staff become sick in 64% of child care outbreaks!

For some germs, ill kids and staff will need to be excluded from child care for a longer time; when you report outbreaks or reportable diseases to us, we will let you know how long ill kids and staff need to be excluded.



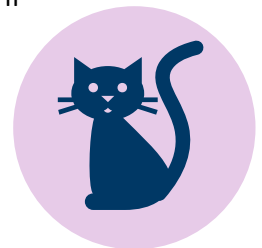
Keeping Everyone Healthy - 2

ANIMALS

People can get sick from germs that animals carry. Even healthy, well-cared for animals can have germs. If you choose to have animals in your child care or take field trips to visit animals, you should know how to prevent illness!

Animals at your child care

1. Some animals are riskier pets than others. Reptiles (lizards, snakes, turtles, etc.), hedgehogs, and baby poultry can carry *Salmonella* and shouldn't be kept as pets if you have children <5 years old.
2. Cleaning of cages, toys, and water or food bowls should not be done in the kitchen sink. Instead, use a laundry tub or bathtub that is cleaned and disinfected afterward.
3. If children have contact with animals or their environments, they should wash their hands with soap and water afterwards.



Field trips or animal visits to the child care

4. Some animals that may be encountered on field trips are riskier than others. These include calves, goats, and sheep. Children <5 are more likely to develop serious infections and should not have any direct contact with these animals.
5. Hand feeding of animals, although fun, is not recommended for children. It increases the risk of germs getting on hands and accidental bites.
6. All visitors to petting zoos or farms should wash their hands well with soap and water after the visit, even if they didn't pet the animals.
7. More information can be found here:
 - [Have Fun and Stay Healthy on The Farm! \(https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Stay-Healthy-on-the-Farm.pdf\)](https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Stay-Healthy-on-the-Farm.pdf)
 - [Staying healthy when the farm comes to you! \(https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/When-the-farm-comes-to-you.pdf\)](https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/When-the-farm-comes-to-you.pdf)

Reporting



WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK?

An outbreak is when two or more people have a similar sickness after using or touching the same objects, food, or water sources or having contact with the same animals.

WHEN TO REPORT

There are certain diseases that must be reported to MDH even if just one person is sick (Minn. Rules part 9503.0140 and 9502.0425). Included in that list are the following infections that often cause diarrhea or vomiting:

1. *Campylobacter*
2. *Cryptosporidium*
3. *E. coli*
4. *Giardia*
5. *Shigella*
6. *Salmonella*

A full list is included in the resources page of this packet.

Additionally, “any pattern of cases, suspected cases, or increased incidence of any illness beyond the expected number of cases in a given period” also must be reported to MDH (Minn. Rules part 4605.7050). This means that **if you see multiple kids with diarrhea or vomiting, you need to report it to MDH, even if the cause of illnesses is not known.**

HOW TO REPORT

Phone: 651-201-5655 | **Toll Free:** 1-877-FOOD-ILL (1-877-366-3455)

Online: [Respiratory Illness and Gastrointestinal Illness Outbreak Reporting \(redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=MJEJYFFCKNLD4N4C\)](https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=MJEJYFFCKNLD4N4C)

Email: health.foodill@state.mn.us

WHY YOU SHOULD REPORT

Reporting illnesses is a requirement of your licensure, but, more importantly, we can help you prevent others from getting sick at your child care. Many illnesses that cause diarrhea can spread from one person to another. We can help you reduce the risk of others getting sick by providing a set of actions to take.

We are always happy to talk if you have any questions!



Stopping the Spread - 1



What to do if you have two or more people at child care who have a similar illness.

Use this list as a starting point! When you talk to MDH, we may ask you to do different or additional things, depending on the germ causing illness and the situation.

REPORT

- Let us know right away if you have two or more people with vomiting/diarrhea. It's required by state law and we can help provide guidance!
 - See **REPORTING** page of this toolkit.

DOCUMENT

- Use the CHILD ILLNESS LOG and STAFF ILLNESS LOG to document illnesses among staff and attendees.
- Send both ILLNESS LOGS back to MDH.
 - (1) within 2 business days of reporting the suspected outbreak. It's okay if not complete yet.
 - (2) between 1 and 2 weeks after the last illness.
- Stool samples are important to confirm the outbreak cause, and determine strains that cause illness – MDH may ask families if they are willing to submit a sample.

STOP THE SPREAD

- Remind kids and staff about handwashing! For example, hang new handwashing posters in bathrooms, send an email reminder to staff, and demonstrate handwashing for kids.
 - Most alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective against some germs. Wash hands with soap and water to remove germs.
 - All attendees should wash their hands before meals or snacks.
 - All staff should wash their hands before preparing or touching food.
- Have attendees stay home while ill with vomiting or diarrhea and until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

Continued on next page

Stopping the Spread - 2

- Immediately clean and sanitize the facility/home. Focus on frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., bathrooms, door handles, counters, tables, water fountains, diaper changing stations, toys).
 - Clean all surfaces with soap and water. Rinse.
 - Hard toys can be run through the dishwasher on a hot cycle.
 - Put away sensory tables/stations until the outbreak is over.
 - Soft toys, blankets and linens should be laundered and dried on hot cycles.
 - Sanitize all surfaces with a strong disinfectant. This will kill most germs including bacteria and norovirus. We may ask you to clean with a different product if the outbreak is caused by a parasite.

Strong (1000 ppm) bleach solution mixed fresh daily: 1 gallon water + 1/3 cup bleach.

For food contact surfaces and toys that frequently go in mouths, rinse with clean water after sanitizing solution has fully dried.

Wear gloves and increase airflow (e.g., open windows/doors) when applying this solution.

- Clean/sanitize at least daily until the outbreak is over (1 week after last illness onset).
- Clean up vomiting or diarrheal incidents immediately.
- Use proper procedures to protect those doing the cleaning from getting sick (see RESOURCES). Never use a vacuum when cleaning up vomit.
- If you have designated kitchen staff or use a catering company, contact them to determine if kitchen staff are ill (ask them to fill out the STAFF ILLNESS LOG). Notify MDH if kitchen staff are ill so that a sanitarian can work with the kitchen to implement other prevention measures.
- Have adults make individual plates for all meals including snacks.
- During an outbreak of vomiting/diarrhea, stop all water play and swimming activities occurring at your child care, including water/sensory tables or kiddie pools, until all illness has resolved.
- During an outbreak of GI illness, refrain from visiting splash pads and public pools until all illness has resolved.

Questions? Please call! 1-800-FOOD-ILL (1-877-366-3455)



HELPFUL LINKS

1. Copy of this packet: [Diarrhea Toolkit Information for Child Care Providers](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/cctoolkit.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/cctoolkit.pdf)
2. [Reportable Diseases List \(MN Rule 4605.7040\)](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7040/)
(www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7040/)
3. [Child Care Provider Information on Diarrheal Illness](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/daycare.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/daycare.html)
4. [Hennepin County Child Care Manual](http://www.hennepin.us/childcaremanual)
(www.hennepin.us/childcaremanual)

POSTERS & HANDOUTS

1. [Vomiting, Diarrhea, and Children – Information for Child Care Providers](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/dcinfigraphic.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/dcinfigraphic.pdf)
2. [Vomiting, Diarrhea, and Children – Information for Parents](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/dcparentsposter.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/dcparentsposter.pdf)
3. [There's No Such Thing as the Stomach Flu](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/norovirus/nostomachflu.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/norovirus/nostomachflu.pdf)
4. Animal field trip handouts to be sent home with permission slips:
 - [Have fun on the farm and stay healthy!](https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Stay-Healthy-on-the-Farm.pdf)
(<https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Stay-Healthy-on-the-Farm.pdf>)
 - [Staying healthy when the farm comes to you!](https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/When-the-farm-comes-to-you.pdf)
(<https://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/When-the-farm-comes-to-you.pdf>)
5. [Don't Forget to Wash](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/wash/dontforget.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/wash/dontforget.pdf)
6. [5 Common Ways Germs are Spread](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/why/5ways.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/why/5ways.pdf)
7. [Vomit Clean Up](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/vomitposter.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/vomitposter.pdf)
8. [When Should I Wash My Hands?](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/why/whenwash.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/why/whenwash.pdf)