

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

March 11, 2016

Re: Gastrointestinal Illness Precautions

The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region is aware that gastrointestinal illness is circulating in the community and could be brought into your school by ill students, child care attendees, visitors and staff. A few schools in Regina and surrounding area have already reported experiencing higher number of students and staff presenting with gastrointestinal illness. Symptoms can include vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache, and low-grade fever. Gastrointestinal illness is very contagious and can easily spread from person to person, by sharing contaminated food, and touching common contact surfaces (e.g. door handles, faucets, telephones and hand railings, etc.).

It is important to protect students, child care attendees and staff. To prevent the spread of gastrointestinal illness, here are some simple rules to follow:

- 1. Ensure everyone washes their hands with liquid soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds** after using the washroom, after a coffee break, before eating and before preparing food, as well as before handling ready to eat food products.
- 2. Students, child care attendees and staff with vomiting and/or diarrhea should stay home. People with these symptoms can easily pass on their illness.**
 - **Ill students, child care attendees and staff should only return to school when their symptoms have cleared for at least 48 hours.**
 - **Ill food handlers must stay away from work until symptoms have cleared for at least 72 hours.**
- 3. Increase the cleaning frequency of all common areas of your school**, including public washrooms, dining areas, stairwells, change rooms, and hallways. Close attention should be paid to the common contact surfaces such as door handles, faucets, telephones and hand railings. A disinfectant product that is effective against norovirus should be used.

Please inform all students, staff, including food service and cleaning staff, to be extra careful and to follow good hand washing technique at all times.

Thank you for your cooperation. Following these simple rules will go a long way in preventing gastroenteritis. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 306-766-7755.

Sincerely,



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Medical Health Officer