

THE “STOMACH FLU”

With the fervor over H1N1 (or the media’s “swine flu”) we tend to forget some of the more common illnesses that we unknowingly share with one another. I have heard people tell me many times that they had the “stomach flu” before, but there is no such thing. The illness in question sure feels like the flu with symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping, but remember influenza is in your lungs, not your gut. What I am referring to is Norovirus or Norwalk-like viruses. There are many ways to describe this illness, but understanding how it is spread is more important than any name that it is called.



Microscopic image of Norovirus

First of all, Norovirus is spread through direct or indirect contact with those who are infected with the virus. Basically, someone has had the symptoms described above, had some of the virus left on their hands and they give it to you. It could be something as innocuous as a handshake, but it is that easy to spread. “Sometimes people additionally have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. In most people the illness is self-limiting with symptoms lasting for about 1 or 2 days. In general, children experience more vomiting than adults.” according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus;
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth;
- having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).



The problem with Norovirus is how fast it can be spread. Once infected with the virus, you may be able to spread it within 6 hours and start to show symptoms within 12-48 hours. The duration of the illness usually lasts 1-2 days, but if dehydration occurs due to vomiting/diarrhea, hospitalization could be necessary. Even after you feel better, you can still “pass” the illness for 3-14 days as described above. It has even been shown to last on hard, non-porous surfaces for up to 12 days (i.e. metal door handles).

Since I have given you the bad news, here is the good news. Norovirus can be prevented through basic, good sanitary practices:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toilet visits, changing diapers and before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

Many antibacterial products are effective on Norovirus. A basic sodium hypo-chlorite solution (bleach water) set to the correct concentration will be effective in combating Norovirus. Quaternary ammonia products (Quats) can also be used specifically for this virus. Iodine solutions and acid based sanitizers can also combat this virus. Remember, if you use these products on food contact surfaces or on non-food contact surfaces in you establishment, set them to a “sanitizing” concentration. If the chemical concentration is too high, it can leave an unwanted chemical residue behind. If you would like to know about specific products, the “U.S. Environmental Protection Agency List G” (you can search for it on the web) lists specific antimicrobial products effective against Norovirus. **http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_g_norovirus.pdf**

If it is so easy to combat, why does it cause so many illnesses? The main reason is poor personal hygiene. Yes there are the instances of shellfish and produce contamination, but in most food service settings it is personal hygiene. So remember, if you are around someone who shows these symptoms (or any other symptoms of a gastrointestinal illness) politely keep your distance and remember to wash your hands. For our restaurants, good personal hygiene and proper sanitizing of food and non-food contact surfaces can reduce the risk of this being a problem. Also, if you show these symptoms, do not come to work and share it with everyone else.

Nick Maggioncalda

Material for this article from: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus-qa.htm>

RECALL AFTER RECALL CONT.

www.recalls.gov

low correct cool down procedures and you always make sure that every employee follows good hygienic practices. But after hearing ANOTHER recall you might sit back and wonder if the food you are serving your customers is safe even before it reaches your facility. Well there is some good news. The U. S. Food and Drug Administration has just awarded \$17.5 million to state and local agencies in October 2009, that will provide grants to help increase the safety of our food supply. However you still have to remember that many times the recalls don't become public knowledge until you have already served the food to the customer. So

by making sure you follow the food code regulations, you can reduce the potential growth of the contamination in the food before it reaches your customer. For example, lets say that you serve lasagna made with ground beef. You hear on the news the next week that the exact



ground beef you used was recalled because it was possibly contaminated with e.coli. As long as you follow the food code and cooked that ground beef to an internal temperature of 155F for 15 seconds you have killed the e.coli that may have been in that meat. You as a manager can reduce the risk of recalled food in your establishment by just following the rules. As far as recalls for items such as sulfites in butter, hopefully with the execution of the million dollar grants we will see less recalls that we have no control over.

Melissa Goetze

2009 EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Bill Cosby was once quoted as saying “I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody”. I'm reminded of this quote each year as I begin the process of evaluating facilities for the food excellence awards. Defining the criteria for these awards is relatively simple. Evaluating each facility for inclusion is

anything but simple. I believe if you understand this process, it may help you in turn to understand why your establishment did or did not make this years list.

First, all facilities regardless of risk must provide documentation of their annual training to TCHD by the first of December. Most of the submittals are

returned as the Training for food excellence award criteria form that all inspectors typically carry with them. Others are requests for training from our own staff, or sending your staff for any of the twice-monthly training sessions provided here at our Tremont facility. I record all submittals in a database as soon as they arrive and store the copy

WASTE REDUCTION CONT..



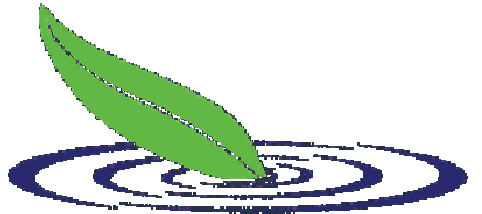
sity polyethylene) or LLDPE (linear low density polyethylene). (HDPE contain fewer raw materials and work equally as well or better and generally cheaper).

Consider contracting a small trash compactor for your facility, often times if enough waste is generated (for example, card board boxes) the monthly recycled content can pay for the lease of the equipment, and the money saved in disposal costs is yours to keep!

Observe proper cool down and storage of food to reduce spoilage and subsequent waste

Inform your patrons of your efforts to recycle and reduce your waste production. You may find more patronage because of it!

Emily Sojstrom



Tri County Green Matters
Pearle • Woodford • Tazewell

Sources used:

Restaurant Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling: Food for Thought, Integrated Waste Management Board, City of San Francisco, California. 1992.

Recycling in Restaurants and Taverns, Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania. (online at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/airwaste/WM/RECYCLE/Tips/Restaurants.htm>).

EXCELLENCE AWARDS CONT..

in a separate folder. When individuals are sent here for training the facility they represent can only be determined if the individuals fill out their attendance form completely as instructed. Omitting the facility name will make confirmation difficult at best. This is my first and most important filter.

Second, is to look for the monitoring and documentation of temperatures. This is of course somewhat subjective.

Would for instance documenting temperatures for a single cooler unit be satisfactory when no documentation is found for any final cooking temperatures or hot holding temperatures?

Would not documenting any cool down temperatures be exclusion when all other temperatures are regularly documented?

I rely on the inspectors notation at the from the inspection form below the

score. A yes notes confirmation that in the opinion of the inspector the documentation was sufficient for the facility. This will serve as my second filter.

Next, I must separate the remaining facilities into working categories. For



It's a major award!

category III facilities, there can be no critical violations noted throughout the year to be included. For category II facilities, to qualify there must be at least one certified manager present throughout the year, no repeat critical violations, and no more than two criti-

cal violations with none being a temperature (#3) violation. For category I facilities to qualify, an approved HACCP plan must be available, an adequate number of food managers for all hours of operation must be noted, no repeat critical violations, and not more than one critical violation per inspection must all be taken into account. This will serve as my final filter.

This final list will be posted on our website by February 1st as a tentative listing of 2009 excellence award winners. This listing will remain on the website for one month for public viewing. During this time if there are any facilities that believe for any reason that they should be included in this listing, but are not, should call our office and we will review all the information and adjust as needed. It is our fervent desire to see to it that all deserving candidates receive the award they earned.

Jerry Maloney
www.tchd.net



2010

Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification

PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED WITH YOUR APPLICATION TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT IN THE CLASS.

Cost: \$80 per person for the class

January 25- 8:30am to 3:45pm
February 01- 8:30am to 3:45pm
February 08- 8:30am to 3:45pm

March 29- 8:30am to 3:45pm
April 05- 8:30am to 3:45pm
April 12- 8:30am to 3:45pm

June 07- 8:30am to 3:45pm
June 14- 8:30am to 3:45pm
June 21- 8:30am to 3:45pm

August 02- 8:30am to 3:45pm
August 09- 8:30am to 3:45pm
August 16- 8:30am to 3:45pm

November 01- 8:30am to 3:45pm
November 08- 8:30am to 3:45pm
November 15- 8:30am to 3:45pm

★ Positive check-in for state manager ★
★ class is **8:00am to 8:30am** on the ★
★ morning of each class days. ★

Refund/Cancellation policy: A %100 refund will be issued if our office is notified within 10 working days before the class. A % 50 refund will be issued if our office is notified within 5 working days before the class, or they can attend a future class and pay an additional \$20.00 for the food manager course, or \$10.00 for the refresher course. No refunds or future class enrollments will be issued after 5 working days. Failure to attend any of the three classes, without prior approval, forfeits the class fee. If no approval has been issued and the participant wishes to attend a future class, a \$15.00 fee per day missed is charged.

Food Refresher Course

YOU MUST BRING YOUR IDPH MANAGER CERTIFICATION ID NUMBER!!!!

Cost: **\$30.00** Positive check-in for the refresher course is **8:30am to 9:00am**

February 18, 9:00am to 3:45pm

May 20, 9:00am to 3:45pm

July 22, 9:00am to 3:45pm

September 23, 9:00am to 3:45pm

November 18, 9:00am to 3:45pm

APPLICATION FOR CLASS

Name of Class: _____ Date of Class(es): _____

Your Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Fee (if any): _____ Where do you work: _____

Do you have any special needs? _____
(i.e. hearing or physical impairment, language barrier, etc.)

Tazewell County Health Department
21306 Illinois Route 9
Tremont, IL 61568