

The nursing staff has been in communication with Rebecca Lang, Montgomery County Health Department, regarding the increase of flu-like symptoms (norovirus) in our schools. Although the South Montgomery Community School Corporation as a whole is not seeing the same absenteeism as our neighbors, it is important as a community to be aware and proactive during the flu season. Below are some helpful tips to act upon at both home and school that can decrease illness and isolate students and employees who are experiencing the effects of flu-like symptoms. When calling in absences, it would be helpful to share if symptoms exist and what types.

NOROVIRUS: Six tips to help protect you and your family.

- 1** Wash your hands often with soap and water. This is very important *before* you eat or prepare food, and *after* you use the toilet or change diapers. If soap and water aren't available, use an substitute for soap and water.
- 2** Rinse fruits and vegetables before you prepare or eat them. Make sure that counters, cutting boards, and utensils are clean and disinfected. It only takes a small amount of norovirus to make you sick.
- 3** Cook shellfish, like oysters, thoroughly. Norovirus is hard to kill. It can survive low cooking temperatures, so make sure you cook shellfish to 140 degrees or higher. A quick steaming will *not* get the job done.
- 4** Don't prepare food or care for others while you're sick with norovirus. This is especially important if you work with food or in healthcare facilities, schools, or day care. Make sure you wait two to three days after you're symptom-free before you prepare food or care for others.
- 5** Clean surfaces and counters and then disinfect them with a bleach solution. After someone vomits or has diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces in the area where the incident occurred. Placing food contaminated with norovirus on a clean kitchen counter or cutting board can transfer the virus to those surfaces. To prevent this, routinely disinfect counters, cutting boards, and utensils.
- 6** Remove and wash clothes and linens that are soiled with vomit or feces. Wear rubber gloves and wash your hands after touching these items. Wash clothes and linens with detergent for the maximum cycle length, then tumble dry.

Practice these prevention tips to help stay norovirus-free. To learn more, visit cdc.gov/norovirus.