

George Latimer
County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

ATTENTION

Public Health Update

The Westchester County Department of Health provides public health updates to members of the medical community on important issues affecting public health in Westchester

DATE: 17 October 2018

SUBJECT: **Norovirus Outbreaks in Congregate Living Situations**

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO EMERGENCY ROOM, AMBULATORY CARE, INTERNAL MEDICINE, PEDIATRIC, FAMILY PRACTICE, PRIMARY CARE, INFECTIOUS DISEASE, AND LABORATORY STAFF

Dear Colleagues:

The advent of cooler weather also is the time when the Westchester County Health Department begins seeing cases of Norovirus and receiving requests for assistance to help limit outbreaks. While Norovirus is most common in colleges, assisted living facilities, long term care facilities and schools, it can also occur in restaurants, banquet halls, and at family gatherings.

The Westchester County Department of Health is thus taking this opportunity to remind health care providers to:

- **Notify Westchester County Department of Health (WCDH) of any suspected cases or outbreaks of norovirus in congregate living situations at (914) 813-5159, Mon-Fri 8:30 AM-4:30 PM**
- **Obtain information about congregate living situations e.g. assisted living, and occupation from any individuals seeking care for GI illness consistent with norovirus**
- **Collect raw or unpreserved unformed stool specimens for 3 types of testing but prioritize viral testing for individuals with compatible symptoms.**
 - **Viral (norovirus) testing- Place stool in a clean preservative-free container.**
 - **Bacterial Culture- Place stool in Cary Blair Transport Medium.**
 - **Ova & Parasite- Place stool in Ecofix Transport Medium.**
- **Hold the specimens at your healthcare facility or office until WCDH can arrange for the testing.**
- **If your office does not have the above specimen collection kits, please send your patients to an ER.**
- **Exclude patients from work, school, and other activities until they are symptom-free for 72 hours.**

Attached, please find:

- CDC Norovirus Fact Sheet <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/downloads/keyfacts.pdf>
-

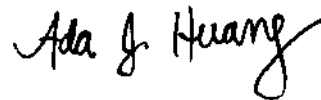
These materials containing additional information regarding the above recommendations for your use and reference and also are available on our website at <https://health.westchestergov.com/norovirus> .

As always, your assistance and co-operation in addressing important public health issues is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health



Ada J. Huang, M.D.
Deputy Commissioner, Disease Control