

ILL CHEERLEADER LEADS TO OUTBREAK

FOOD SAFETY INFOSHEET

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OVER 220 AT CHEERLEADING COMPETITION FALL ILL WITH NOROVIRUS

Two hundred and twenty-nine were sickened and at least 33 people sought medical attention after experiencing gastrointestinal illness symptoms following a Washington State cheerleading competition in 2012.

After investigating, Snohomish Health District (WA) confirmed that norovirus was the cause. Health officials believe that the outbreak grew because affected individuals vomited in public.

The outbreak likely started when a participant showed up at the competition while ill. Officials noted that janitorial crews were called to clean up vomit in a restroom and on an adjacent walkway. Those areas were potential exposure sites for the cheer and dance teams.



Use protective tools when cleaning up vomit, including disposable latex gloves, a disposable surgical or procedure mask, and apron. Norovirus can be aerosolized in vomit and may be spread up to 25 feet outside visually affected areas.

Chlorine bleach can inactivate norovirus; Quaternary ammonia (quats) are not recommended because they aren't effective.

A 5,000 ppm (25 tablespoons 5.25% bleach per gallon of water) bleach solution should be applied to soiled areas for at least 4 minutes.

When cleaning up vomit:

- Carefully wipe the spill, avoiding further spread, with paper towels and bag the residues;
- pour bleach solution or other disinfectant intended to kill pathogens on and around the area;
- let solution act for at least 4 minutes;
- wipe the remaining solution and reclean and sanitize the area as per normal, non-vomit event procedures;
- all disposable material should be discarded in plastic bags;
- nondisposable material should be bleached and air-dried; and,
- double-bag and tie up plastic garbage bags and discard.



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