



FOOD SAFETY & SANITATION

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The Everclean Report

Know Your Bugs - Norovirus

Submitted by M. Shafer, NV

Special Interest Articles:

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Norovirus continues to be a significant concern in the food service and retail food industry. CDC experts believe that at least 50% of all foodborne outbreaks of gastroenteritis can be attributed to Norovirus. The best method for protecting your facility is knowledge and incident "readiness". The following key points may be helpful:

What is Norovirus? Infection with Norovirus affects the stomach and intestines, causing an illness called gastroenteritis, aka "stomach flu". This "stomach flu" is not related to influenza, a respiratory illness. The infection begins 24-28 hours after ingesting the virus and it lasts 1-2 days. Symptoms may include:

- Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea with abdominal cramps.
- Headache, fever/chills, and muscle aches.

How is Norovirus spread? The virus is found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected by eating contaminated food or drinks; by touching contaminated surfaces and then placing their hand in their mouth; or by having direct contact with another person who is infected. Food can be contaminated either by direct contact with contaminated hands or work surfaces.

Why is Norovirus important to foodservice? It poses some unique challenges - it is highly contagious, resistant to some common chemicals and can resist environmental barriers such as freezing or heat treatment.

Effective Norovirus prevention includes: reinforcement of hand washing, minimizing bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, an employee health policy, management and employee education, and awareness of issues related to the water supply in your area.

The Health Department

Submitted by M. Lichlyter, CO

A health department visit can be stressful for management and staff but it doesn't have to be! Proper planning and understanding of the visit can help you prepare.

- Review previous health department and Everclean reports. Then, conduct a self-inspection to determine if previously noted items have been corrected.
- Ask the inspector the purpose of the visit. Is it routine or are they following up on a complaint?
- Management should walk with the inspector every step of the way, taking notes, asking and answering questions, and addressing or correcting any violations that are brought up.
- After the inspector leaves, it is the management's responsibility to follow up on violations and train the staff. Understand what the inspector is looking for so the proper corrections can be implemented.
- Use your Everclean Food Safety Specialist as your personal trainer to practice before your health inspection.

Ice is Food!

Submitted by G. Demirjian, NJ

There are many tools associated with serving ice - the ice maker, buckets, satellite bins, scoops and scoop holders. All of these tools are considered food contact surfaces that must be routinely washed, rinsed, sanitized and allowed to air dry. To keep ice free from contamination always use clean equipment to carry or scoop ice. Never use paper cups, bowls, or glasses to scoop ice. Always use an approved scoop with a handle. Buckets should be stored inverted on a clean surface and scoops in their holders between uses. The ice maker itself should be cleaned according to the manufacturer's recommendation.

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