

26 September 2013

**Dear Parents, Whanau and Caregivers of Massey Childcare Centre**

**UPDATE**

Further to our letter dated 12 September 2013 we are continuing working with staff to reduce spread of diarrhoea and vomiting illness which has been affecting the centre over the last 3-4 weeks.

We have been receiving daily information from the centre on the numbers of people affected and this has shown us that the illness is continuing to circulate among children and staff. We have had two positive tests for Norovirus and believe this virus is responsible for the illness at the centre. We understand a norovirus fact sheet was emailed to families this week.

Today we visited the centre to review and support the ongoing infection controls that have been implemented at the centre. Staff are doing a great job and they really appreciate the efforts to date from families that have supported the controls that have been put in place.

We have decided to send this letter to reiterate the importance of continuing to support the centre staff with their control measures as well as ideas of what you can do at home to prevent illness within your family. Everyone working together to support the centre will help prevent further children and staff becoming ill.

**The key messages continue to be:**

- Do not bring your child (and yourself, or other family members) to the centre if suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting
- Keep your child (and yourself, or other family members) home for 48 hours after the last bout of diarrhoea and/or vomiting (do not bring your child back to the centre until 2 days has passed since they have vomited or had runny poos)
- Regular, effective hand washing - this includes washing (with warm water and soap) and drying hands thoroughly:
  - ✦ **After going to the toilet**
  - ✦ **After changing nappies**
  - ✦ **After cleaning up faecal or vomit accidents**
  - ✦ **After caring for a person with diarrhoea or vomiting**
  - ✦ **Before and after preparing food**

**Ideas on what you can do at home to avoid the spread of illness:**

As few as 10 Norovirus particles may be enough to infect a healthy person. An infected person sheds many Norovirus particles and can easily transmit the virus to other people through sharing their food, utensils, drinks or touching common surfaces. Norovirus particles can also be spread by air from a vomit episode. Norovirus can survive in excess of 10 days in the environment.

There is no specific treatment to rid your body of the virus. Your immune system will overcome the virus, given time. To assist with recovery, extra fluid and rest are recommended as outlined in our previous letter. However, a doctor should always be consulted if symptoms are severe and they may give further advice or treat specific symptoms.

If you have family members who are ill with vomiting or diarrhoea symptoms it is important to:

- Avoid preparing food for others if you are unwell and for 48 hours after symptoms finish.
- Clean up any faeces (poo) and vomit on hard surfaces with hot water and detergent, followed by a diluted solution of bleach. Other general household cleaners are not effective on Norovirus. Make up dilute solution of bleach in a bucket: 4 teaspoons of bleach (20ml) to 1 litre of water. Use gloves and disposable cloths or paper towels if possible. Ensure that the surrounding area is also cleaned, as aerosols will travel. Wash hands thoroughly when finished.
- For contaminated soft furnishings and carpets (that have had vomit and or poo spilt on them) some disinfectants may not be effective or appropriate on this surface (e.g. bleach solutions may damage or discolour). Steam cleaning is recommended after the initial hot water and detergent clean. If you don't have access to a steam cleaner you can iron over a wet towel to sanitise the affected area – do a small test area first on carpet/furniture). Do not vacuum carpets or soft furnishing until the area has been thoroughly cleaned and treated as vacuuming can cause the viral particles to become airborne.
- Soak towels, linen and clothing which have been contaminated with vomit or faecal matter in a sanitising solution (e.g. nappysan) and machine wash in a hot cycle.
- Soak in a sanitising solution any contaminated non-disposable cleaning cloths, mop heads before a hot machine wash.
- Keep toilets and bathroom areas clean and sanitised (using diluted bleach).
- Avoid having guests to your home while family members are ill.

Please contact myself or another Health Protection Officer if you have any further questions relating to this letter.

Kind Regards

**LOUISE ALLEN**  
Health Protection Officer  
MidCentral Public Health Service