



# Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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**TO: All Schools in Cumbria & Lancashire**

October 2016

Dear Colleague

## **NOROVIRUS SEASON**

We are writing to highlight that we are beginning to experience the seasonal increase in outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting caused by norovirus ("norovirus season"). In recent years we have seen an increasing number of norovirus outbreaks and these cause considerable difficulties throughout the community. We are therefore writing to ask for your assistance and to remind you of the importance of being vigilant for diarrhoea and vomiting (D&V) episodes/outbreaks.

### **We need your help with preventing and controlling outbreaks in schools**

Early recognition of diarrhoea and/or vomiting outbreaks in schools is vital so that effective control measures can be put in place. Thorough hand washing with liquid soap and water, environmental cleaning and prompt exclusion of affected children or staff, are vital infection control measures during an outbreak of D&V within a school. Children or staff with D&V should not return to school until they have been **symptom free for 48 hours**.

An information leaflet about norovirus is enclosed with this letter. If you have any queries, or need advice during a diarrhoea and/or vomiting outbreak, please do not hesitate to call the Cumbria & Lancashire Health Protection Team on 0344 225 0562 opt 2.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Nicola Schinaia**  
Consultant in Health Protection



## Stop the spread of the Winter Vomiting 'bug' (Norovirus)

### Help prevent more illness

- \* Wash your hands frequently using warm water and a liquid soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing foods
- \* When you have washed your hands dry them thoroughly with a paper towel
- \* Wash your hands before and after touching your mouth, and coughing or sneezing into your hands
- \* Discard or flush away vomit and/or stool and wash hands
- \* Make sure that the toilet and toilet area, flush handles, taps and door handles are always kept clean
- \* Cover vomit immediately with paper towelling to prevent spread of the virus and report contaminated areas/ surfaces to domestic or facilities staff
- \* Symptomatic staff must stay off work until they have been free from all symptoms for 48 hours
- \* Patients must inform staff if they have been in contact with people with diarrhoea and/or vomiting in last 72 hours

