May 17, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We have become aware of a possible viral gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-I-tis) outbreak among students and staff at TUSD. We are working closely with the San Joaquin County Public Health in response to this increase in illness.

Though several viruses can cause gastroenteritis, norovirus is the most common. All are easily transmitted through food, by person-to-person contact, or through contaminated surfaces. Therefore, take caution if one of your family members is affected because the virus spreads easily in the home as well. Norovirus is sometimes called the “stomach flu”, but is not related to influenza (the flu), which is a respiratory viral illness that causes fever, cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, runny nose, and sore throat.

Norovirus often causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. Symptoms may also include low-grade fever, headache, weakness, and muscle aches. Symptoms can begin as early as 12 hours after exposure to the virus or as late as 48 hours. The symptoms of norovirus usually last 1-3 days. In most cases, ill persons fully recover without medical attention. However, norovirus infection can result in hospitalization due mainly to dehydration, especially in the very young and elderly. Those with severe diarrhea should drink lots of liquids. Symptoms that are not seen with norovirus infection are bloody diarrhea or high fever. We advise contacting your medical provider right away for any of the above symptoms. Please notify the school when calling your child in sick if they have any of these symptoms.

Children and adults exhibiting symptoms of viral gastroenteritis should be excluded from school or other group activities for at least 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped.

The best way to limit the spread of these viruses is frequent hand washing for at least 30 seconds using soap and warm running water, being sure to completely clean all areas of hands and under fingernails. Preventing contamination of food, drinks, water, and ice is also very important. People who have been sick with norovirus-like symptoms should not prepare or serve food to others for at least 3 days after their symptoms are gone. It’s important to know that most household cleaners are ineffective against norovirus and bleach is the only reliable means of disinfection.

Upon hearing of a possible Norovirus incident in our district, our Maintenance Department began an entire-site clean-up using Alpet D2 Surface Disinfectant, which can only be applied after school hours. Alpet D2 Surface Disinfectant is the first ready-to-use disinfectant to receive an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) efficacy claim against Norovirus. Hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, cruise lines, schools, food service facilities and other industries now have access to a ready-to-use EPA registered product that is strong enough to kill norovirus but safe enough to use on babies’ toys.

Further information about norovirus and how to limit its spread can be found at San Joaquin county Public Health www.sjcphs.org or you can contact CDC at www.cdc.gov and type “norovirus” in the search box.

Sincerely,

TUSD Department of Health Services
(209)830-3241