

January 26, 2024

The Cabarrus Health Alliance is currently investigating a cluster of gastrointestinal illnesses affecting a number of patrons and staff at a local water park in the county. The rapid spread of this gastrointestinal illness and the presenting symptoms indicate probable Norovirus. We are striving to understand how many people are ill. We would like to ask a few questions to understand when people got sick, how long people were sick, and when symptoms subsided. If anyone presents to your facility with gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea and has visited or worked at Great Wolf Lodge since 1/11/2024, please have them complete one of the following:

- Call the Cabarrus Health Information Line at 704-920-1213
- Complete the survey link
<https://survey.dph.ncdhhs.gov/surveys/?s=XD7TTHFEFJTHYE8A>
- Call the NC DHHS Epi-on-Call at 919-773-3419

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause gastroenteritis in humans. The average incubation period for Norovirus-associated gastroenteritis is 12-48 hours. Illness is characterized by acute-onset vomiting, watery, non-bloody diarrhea with abdominal cramps, and nausea. In addition, myalgia, malaise, and headache are commonly reported. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne disease outbreaks in the United States and a common cause of outbreaks in long-term care facilities, schools, restaurants, and other group settings.

Noroviruses spread from person to person through contaminated food or water and by touching contaminated surfaces. The spread of norovirus illness can be controlled by following these simple measures:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and dry with a clean towel (hand sanitizer gels are not effective against norovirus);
- Clean up vomit and diarrhea;
- Stay home when sick;
- While you have norovirus symptoms, do not prepare food for others to eat while you are sick and for at least 48 hours afterward, and
- Even after your symptoms are gone, continue to be careful to wash your hands frequently, especially after going to the bathroom; people can spread the virus for days and sometimes weeks after their illness ends.

If you have any questions, call the Cabarrus Health Alliance Information Line at 704-920-1213.

For more information, please visit <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/norovirus.html>