

DATE: May 10, 2016

END DATE: May 31, 2016

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RE: Gastrointestinal Illnesses

Genesee County has seen a recent increase in gastrointestinal illnesses which causes mild to severe diarrhea. Those mainly affected are school-aged children but some older adults have been identified. The most common symptoms include loose stools, potential fever, gas, abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting. The symptoms may occur between 1 and 10 days. Any person experiencing diarrhea should stay home from work or school until diarrhea has ceased for at least 2 days. More specifically, we have seen slightly increased cases of Cryptosporidiosis, Salmonellosis, and Shigellosis for this time of the year.

Diarrheal illnesses are spread from person-to-person through a fecal-oral route. That is to say, the bacteria leave an infected person's body in the stool and are spread by contaminated hands, surfaces, food or water. In addition, individuals may become ill by eating contaminated, recalled food products. The FDA food recalls can be found here: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm>. Please watch for symptoms in your child and other family members. If symptoms occur, consult your family physician for proper testing/treatment if necessary.

The spread of disease can be prevented by avoiding recalled foods and practicing good hand hygiene. Proper hand washing takes at least 20 seconds with soap and warm running water, including cleaning under fingernails. This should be done after using the restroom or before preparing or eating food. Those experiencing diarrhea should not handle food for others.

GCHD wants everyone to stay happy and healthy this spring. Visit our website at www.gchd.us for more information regarding gastrointestinal illness or specific disease conditions. In addition, please visit <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm> for the most recent food recalls.