



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration

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March 7, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Maryland state and local health officials are investigating an outbreak of gastrointestinal (GI) illness with symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and fever associated with the "2011 Maryland Swimming Championship Meet", held at the aquatic facilities of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The meet took place from Thursday, March 3 through Sunday, March 6, 2011, and member(s) of your family are identified as meet participants.

Given the characteristics of the GI illness and the close quarters of participants at the meet, public health authorities suspect that the illness is caused by a virus that is very contagious and is most commonly passed from person to person. Gastrointestinal illnesses can spread quickly from one person to another through contact with an infected person and contaminated surfaces.

People can become infected by:

- Touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then placing their hands in their mouth.
- Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms.
- Eating or drinking contaminated food or water.
- Ingestion of airborne (aerosolized) vomit particles.

Approximately 30 swim clubs (~800 competitors) from Maryland attended the event. Maryland Swimming, Inc. and individual team head coaches are aware of efforts to describe and contain the illness.

First, if your child is ill and you have concerns regarding their health, do not hesitate to contact your healthcare provider. If your child was ill at the meet, or develops symptoms by this Wednesday, March 9, please notify your coach.

Second, we are conducting a confidential on-line questionnaire for *both ill AND well* meet participants and their families, in order to gather more details on ways this GI illness may have been transmitted.

The link for the survey is: www.surveymonkey.com/s/swimmeet

The password is: **swimming**

Third, in order to prevent the further spread of the disease, public health suggests refraining from attending swim practice or other group activities for at least 24 hours after symptoms (nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea) have ended. The best way to prevent and control spread of an infection is by frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water. Wash hands often, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, before

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410-767-6742 Fax 410-333-5995
Toll Free 1-877-4MD-DHMH TTY for Disabled
Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

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Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

Web Site: <http://eh.dhmh.md.gov/ideah/>

eating or preparing food, and after having diarrhea or vomiting. Frequent cleaning of high contact surfaces in your environment (such as door knobs/handles, light switches, countertops, etc.) with a bleach solution or bleach-based disinfectant is also very important. If your child currently has symptoms named above, make sure they drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and encourage increased hand washing. If symptoms become severe, contact your physician.

Additionally, the Maryland DHMH Viral Gastroenteritis Fact Sheet contains more information and may be found at the DHMH website address: (http://www.edcp.org/pdf_factsheets/viral_gastroenteritis.pdf).

If you have a concern about an illness or about your symptoms, please contact your health care provider. If you have any questions pertaining to the investigation, you may contact the Division of Outbreak Investigation, Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at 410-767-6677 or contact the Communicable Diseases division at your local health department

Thank you for your assistance,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lucy Wilson'.

Lucy Wilson, MD, ScM
Chief, Center for Surveillance, Infection Prevention and Outbreak Response
Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene