

BROWN COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Agencies in Brown County Urge Preventative Measures Against Norovirus and Respiratory Illnesses

BROWN COUNTY, Wis. – Brown County Public Health, the De Pere Health Department, and the Oneida Nation Health Department are urging residents to remain vigilant as norovirus and respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV, continue to circulate in the community and across Wisconsin.

“These illnesses can spread quickly, especially during the colder months when people are more likely to gather indoors, so their increasing numbers at this time are not considered surprising,” said Michelle Tipple, Public Health Officer for the Oneida Nation Health Department. “To protect yourself, your family, and the community, our agencies are jointly recommending you take preventive measures.”

Stop the Spread of Norovirus

Norovirus, often referred to as the “stomach flu,” can cause vomiting and diarrhea. It spreads easily, particularly in close-contact settings such as schools, workplaces, and care facilities. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in Wisconsin.

- **Wash your hands.** Use soap and water after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, before preparing foods, and before eating.
- **Handle and prepare food safely.** Carefully wash fruits and vegetables and cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly.
- **If sick, do not prepare food or take care of others.** Wait at least two days after symptoms stop.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces.** Use a household bleach solution immediately after someone vomits or has diarrhea. Wash soiled clothes and linens thoroughly.

“Norovirus can easily contaminate your food or drink because it only takes a very small amount to make someone sick,” said Anna Nick, Health Officer for Brown County Public Health. “Hand sanitizer is *not* an effective prevention method against norovirus so please wash your hands frequently with soap and water and avoid making food for others if you’re experiencing symptoms. Please stay home if you’re sick.”

Prevent Respiratory Illnesses

Respiratory illnesses, such as the flu and COVID-19, can cause fever, cough, sore throat, and fatigue. In severe cases, they can lead to hospitalization or death. State data for the week ending on December 28 shows high respiratory illness activity with the trajectory of positive tests for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV all increasing.

- **Stay home if you are sick.**
- **Wash your hands and practice good hygiene.**
- **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
- **Stay up to date with vaccinations.**

“Simple steps like washing hands, disinfecting surfaces, and staying home when sick can make a big difference in stopping the spread of respiratory illnesses,” said Chrystal Woller, Health Officer for the De Pere Health Department. “Together, we can keep our community healthier and safer this season.”

Consult with your health professional if you become sick and symptoms persist beyond several days.

For additional information about norovirus and common respiratory illnesses, you may visit the [Wisconsin DHS](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites.

For media inquiries, please contact Adam Behnke, Communications Specialist for Brown County Public Health at (920) 448-6439 or adam.behnke@browncountywi.gov.

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