

# Bartlett Regional Hospital

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**DATE:** Wednesday, June 18, 2008  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: HOAX EMAIL - Breakout of the Norwalk Virus in Downtown Juneau**

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Bartlett Regional Hospital has received a number of calls attempting to confirm information sent via email to various agencies in Juneau today, Wednesday, June 18, 2008, regarding an outbreak of Norwalk Virus in Juneau. Bartlett is not able to confirm the source of the information contained in the email but has confirmed that the information is not correct.

It is not unusual for the Hospital to see one or two patients per day with symptoms that include vomiting and diarrhea, Infection Control Officer, Jan Beauchamp confirmed today that Bartlett has not seen an increase in patients presenting with gastrointestinal issues and the hospital did not treat 30 people on Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**If you receive the message below, please ignore and share that it is not true. In the meantime, please read the information on norovirus and ALWAYS wash your hands!**

*"From a call from Juneau Police Department, we have had a breakout of the Norwalk Virus that has hit the downtown area. There were 30 people in the emergency room from the Virus yesterday (6/17)." According to sources, the Juneau Police Department has denied making this statement.*

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the "stomach flu" or gastroenteritis. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness often comes on suddenly, but is usually brief with symptoms lasting 1-2 days.

Norovirus is usually not serious, although people may feel very sick and vomit throughout the day. Typically people get better within 1-2 days and have no long term health effects. Sometimes however, people are unable to keep fluids down to stay hydrated. If people become too dehydrated, medical attention may be needed.

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus;
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth;
- Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

Symptoms of norovirus usually begin about 24-48 hours after ingestion of the virus, but can be as early as 12 hours after exposure. People are contagious from the moment they begin to feel ill to at least 3 days after recovery, but some can be contagious for up to 2 weeks after recovery.

Currently there is no treatment for norovirus because it is a virus, so it cannot be treated with antibiotics. You can however, decrease your chance of coming in contact with noroviruses by following these preventive steps:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toilet visits and changing diapers and before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables and steam oysters before eating them.

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomitus and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

For more information, visit The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)