



# Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

Barry County: 330 W. Woodlawn Ave., Hastings MI 49058  
Phone: 269-945-9516 Fax: 269-818-0237

Eaton County: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813  
Phone: 517-543-2430 Fax: 517-543-7737

Eaton Behavioral Health: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI  
48813  
Phone: 517-543-2580 Fax: 517-543-8191

## For Immediate Release

May 18, 2016

#2

### Carrabba's Outbreak Over, Caused by Norovirus

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) has been investigating a cluster of gastrointestinal illnesses in more than 100 individuals who dined at Carrabba's on West Saginaw Highway in Lansing on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. No illnesses related to this cluster have been reported by individuals who dined at Carrabba's after May 8<sup>th</sup>. Based on this, BEDHD has determined that the outbreak has ended. Laboratory tests have confirmed that the cause of the outbreak was norovirus, although the source of the illness is not known.

Upon receiving reports of illness on May 10<sup>th</sup>, Carrabba's closed voluntarily for intensive environmental cleaning and disinfection. The restaurant then reopened on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, after consultation with BEDHD.

Norovirus is the most common cause of outbreaks of vomiting and diarrhea. It affects more than 20 million Americans each year. There are more than 150 norovirus-like illness outbreaks per year in Michigan. Outbreaks happen at public events and in group settings, such as long-term care facilities, restaurants, schools, and cruise ships.

The virus is most often spread by person-to-person contact but also can be spread from high-touch surfaces. "Norovirus and other stomach bugs can survive for days on surfaces such as doorknobs and table tops; when people touch these contaminated surfaces, they then can then transfer the stomach bugs to their mouths," said Robert Schirmer, MD, Medical Director for BEDHD. Because of this, people who have had norovirus should avoid public settings while sick and for 48 hours after symptoms disappear. In addition, both sick and well individuals should wash their hands often, especially after using restrooms and before eating.

Foods prepared by ill or recently ill individuals at restaurants or at home for group gatherings, such as graduation parties, are also sources of norovirus. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness outbreaks. Anyone who has been sick with an acute stomach illness (vomiting or diarrhea) should be free of symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours before preparing foods.

If you are ill or caring for someone who may be ill with any gastrointestinal illness, BEDHD suggests that you follow the CDC recommendations for norovirus. These and other information about norovirus, including additional food-safety guidelines, are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html>.

###END###

**Media Contact: Greg Cabose, (517) 541-2616**