

## NOROVIRUS PREVENTION

As you may be aware through the media coverage, there is another circulating viral illness to protect yourself against this season....the *Norovirus*. Infection with this virus causes an illness called gastroenteritis. This year's strain of *Norovirus* is highly contagious and causes people to have sudden onset of symptoms lasting several days. These symptoms include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Occasionally, there may be a fever and abdominal cramping involved. This is not to be confused with "the flu" or influenza which presents with a high fever, cough, body aches and sore throat.

### **You can decrease your risk by:**

- **Washing your hands more frequently.** Hands need to be washed after every time you use the bathroom and before eating. Use soap, warm water and paper towels. Use the paper towel to turn off the faucets and to open the bathroom door. Also, keep hands away from your face. Most "stomach bugs" are transmitted by getting a microscopic amount of the germ into your mouth!
- **Keeping your areas clean.** Decrease the risk of transmission to others by wiping down the sink and toilet after each use with a sanitizing wipe, like Clorox wipes.
- **Taking care of your immune system.** Make yourself a less susceptible "host". Get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol and tobacco and eat a healthy, low sugar diet. Regular exercise has also been proven to boost the immune system.

Gastroenteritis will usually resolve on its own in 24 – 48 hours. You need to re-hydrate yourself SLOWLY with sips of flat soda or Gatorade. Stick to a clear liquid diet for the first 24 hours. Do not try to eat any food until you can keep fluids down for 8 hours. Seek medical attention if you are having any abdominal pain, unable to keep down any fluids over 8 hours, or if you feel dizzy or faint. With a little extra care you can help to have a healthy semester