

February 12, 2016

Dear Britt Elementary School Parent or Guardian:

Yesterday, through our calling system, I notified you that we had seen a higher than usual number of students who had become ill with gastroenteritis. Gastroenteritis often causes diarrhea and/or vomiting. We have worked with the Gwinnett County Health Department to determine the cause of illness and to put in place measures to reduce the spread of illness.

Based on the symptoms reported, the Health Department suspects the Norovirus as the cause of illness. Norovirus is easily spread person to person and can be spread through food. Viral gastroenteritis can cause nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. Symptoms usually develop in 12 to 24 hours after exposure and most people get better in 1 to 2 days. People also can be infected and have no symptoms. ***On the back of this letter, you will find a Health Department fact sheet, which includes additional information about gastroenteritis.***

How do you protect your family from viral gastroenteritis? The Gwinnett County Health Department recommends the following precautions:

1. **Monitor your child** and members of your family to see if they develop diarrhea, and/or vomiting.
2. **If your child develops vomiting or diarrhea, please keep them home from school until their symptoms are gone for at least 24-48 hours without the aid of medication.** You may wish to contact your child's physician and inform them that there are students with viral gastroenteritis at your child's school.
3. **Encourage your child and family members to thoroughly wash their hands** before preparing or eating food, after using the restroom, and upon returning home from school in the afternoons. Hand sanitizer is NOT effective against Norovirus. Staff at our school will continue to work with your child to encourage proper hand washing at school.

As always, thank you for your support of our school. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your child's physician. You may also contact the Gwinnett County Health Department at (770) 339-4260.

Sincerely,
Doris Jones,
Principal