

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**KEEP IT CLEAN AND STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK TO KEEP ILLNESS FROM SPREADING**

*Health department urges community to take precautions to help prevent illness*

OCALA—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County wants residents and visitors to know how they can help prevent spreading diseases.

Since February, the department has identified 28 cases of “stomach bugs” in Marion County. That compares to 17 cases during the same time in 2014. There have been reports of illness in adults and children in many types of group facilities.

“This is the time of year when stomach bugs often spread,” said Amy Reilly, Communicable Diseases program supervisor at the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. “And there seem to be a lot more of these bugs this year. Frequent hand-washing will help stop the spread of illnesses. Take special care before preparing food and after using the toilet or changing a diaper. These are the most effective steps you can take to help prevent the spread of diseases.”

Cleaning surfaces will also help keep germs from spreading.

“Keep surfaces clean and you will help keep diseases from spreading,” said Dan Dooley, environmental administrator at the department. “Use a mild bleach solution to disinfect counters, tables, toys and other places where germs may have been left behind. You can make a cleaning solution by mixing 1/4 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water.”

Germs that may cause gastrointestinal illness can produce nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach cramps. People may also have a low-grade fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, and an overall tired feeling.

“People with stomach bug symptoms should stay home,” said Reilly. “And if your children are sick keep them home until they are well. You don’t want to pass the illness to your friends or co-workers, and you sure don’t want other children to get sick.”

In addition, people should not prepare food for others or work in places like child care, school, food service, or health care facilities while they have symptoms. They should wait until symptoms are gone for at least two or three days.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [Marion.FloridaHealth.gov](#).

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