



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Outbreak investigation underway at South Lamar School

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has determined that norovirus is the cause of the recent gastrointestinal outbreak at South Lamar School in Millport. Norovirus is a very common cause of vomiting and diarrhea. The virus can be spread from contaminated surfaces such as counters, sinks and faucets. It can also be spread through food. The virus is very contagious from person to person. Fortunately, people generally recover within a couple of days of the illness. At this time, no new reports of illness have been received, but the investigative process is continuing.

Dr. Albert White, Area Health Officer and Infectious Disease specialist, states, "Persons who are ill with vomiting and diarrhea should stay home until they are well. They should not prepare food for others while ill." In addition, White states that hand washing and environmental cleaning are very important measures to reduce the spread of norovirus to others.

South Lamar School continues to cooperate in the investigation. The school acted quickly, and carried out a cleaning process Wednesday night. Cafeteria food specimens and menus have been obtained, there has been an environmental assessment, and additional patient specimens have been requested.