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## ***In Safe Hands*** **Certifications by Thornhill Training**

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### **Phone-use verses Norovirus**

#### **How cell phones at work can affect health, food safety, productivity and customer service**

Harmful viruses are found on phones and other objects. Understanding how to prevent viruses is crucial to the health of your families, customers and fellow team members.

I find it surprising how lax phone use policies seem to be. Using the phone may affect productivity, customer service and *most importantly can lead to foodborne illness for customers and fellow staff.*

**Productivity** - While doing mock health inspections for clients I'll see food handlers getting their phones out of their pockets even during busy hours. They should stay focused and on task to alleviate errors and not slow down food preparation.

**Customer service** - A customer turn off is seeing servicers in the corner on their phone while in need of something like silverware or the check. This not only reflects on the server but on management as well.

**Foodborne illness** - *The biggest concern is the potential lack of hygiene and food safety which can lead to foodborne illness like Norovirus which causes the majority of all foodborne illnesses.*

Norovirus is a troublesome stomach bug because not only is it easy to catch, it's very hard to kill.

It can last for days or even weeks on a phone, counter, an elevator button or even on a doorknob. If somebody doesn't wash their hands thoroughly after going to the bathroom, you can catch it.

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### **5 Key Ways to Prevent Norovirus from Spreading at Work and Home**

- 1) **Practice proper hand hygiene.** Most important is hand washing. Norovirus is often transferred to food when infected food handlers touch food or equipment with fingers that have feces on them. Always wash your hands carefully with soap and water after using the toilet and before eating, preparing, or handling food. Norovirus **isn't** killed with hand sanitizer. If you use sanitizer always wash hands first with soap and water.
- 2) **Wash fruits and vegetables and cook seafood thoroughly.** Carefully wash fruits and vegetables before preparing and eating them. Cook oysters and other shellfish thoroughly before eating them. Food that might be contaminated with Norovirus should be thrown out.
- 3) **Rules for the foodservice industry.** When an employee has been diagnosed with Norovirus or Hepatitis A virus, upon diagnosis,

- a) The food handler is required to immediately notify the manager.
  - b) The manager sends the employee home.
  - c) The manager contacts the local regulatory authority of the diagnosis.
  - d) Work with the food handler's medical practitioner and the local regulatory authority to decide when the person can go back to work.
  - e) Make sure employees wash hands frequently, minimize bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food and purchase shellfish from approved, reputable suppliers.
- 4) **Clean and sanitize contaminated surfaces.** After throwing up or having diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces.  
At home use a chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of 1000–5000 ppm (5–25 tablespoons of household bleach [5.25%] per gallon of water) or other disinfectant registered as effective against norovirus by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).  
\* For food establishments follow the Model Food Code.
- 5) **Wash laundry thoroughly.** Immediately remove and wash clothes or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or stool (feces).

For more information on Norovirus

“Norovirus: Key Facts” by CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/downloads/keyfacts.pdf>

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