

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Secretary Catherine Torres, M.D.

NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Secretary David Martin

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Dept. of Health, Environment Dept. and City of Santa Fe Investigating Gastrointestinal Illness Outbreak

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico Environment Department and the City of Santa Fe are investigating an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in students and staff attending summer youth programs at Monica Roybal Center. Approximately thirty children and four adults became sick between June 7 and June 8. Nobody has been hospitalized.

The cause of this outbreak is still under investigation; however, sick people generally have had vomiting and diarrhea and have recovered after one or two days. The Department of Health is sending a letter to parents and guardians of children who attend the summer youth program to alert them of the outbreak and to provide prevention guidelines.

“We are working with several agencies to identify the cause of the outbreak and to provide information to prevent future outbreaks,” Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres said. “Germs that cause gastrointestinal illness can be spread by vomit or stool and can lead to illness in people who have come in contact with contaminated food, contaminated items or sick people. To help prevent future outbreaks, I encourage everyone to practice proper hand hygiene by washing their hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers and always before eating or preparing food.”

A New Mexico Environment Department Field Operations Inspector found all food distribution programs affected to be in compliance. New Mexico Environment Department Cabinet Secretary David Martin said that follow-up tests will better determine the cause of the illnesses.

Staff at the city’s Monica Roybal Center notified the Department of Health immediately when the outbreak surfaced late Tuesday and early Wednesday. Community Services Department Director Isaac Pino emphasized that there have not been any illnesses reported at other city summer youth program sites, and there has been no recommendation from the Department of Health that the Monica Roybal Center or other city summer youth program sites be closed.

“What we’re asking parents is that if your child does come down with the symptoms— abdominal cramps, vomiting and diarrhea, to keep your child home,” Pino said.

The Department of Health also recommends the following to keep you and your family safe:

- Take care in the kitchen: Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and cook food thoroughly before eating.
- Do not prepare food if you have vomiting or diarrhea.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces: After an episode of illness, such as vomiting or diarrhea, immediately clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Wash laundry thoroughly: Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or diarrhea.

If your child attended a youth program in Santa Fe and has vomiting or diarrhea, please contact your medical provider or the Department of Health at (505) 827-0006.

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