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107 Notre Dame campers get sick, some hospitalized

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NOTRE DAME, Ind. - Food poisoning or a virus could be to blame for more than one hundred kids becoming suddenly sick on Wednesday. The middle and high school kids were attending Notre Dame's sports camps on campus and 29 of them were sent to area hospitals.

The kids all had similar symptoms including vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea.

The St. Joseph County Health Department said it believes the kids have food poisoning or have the norovirus.

"With this many starting about the same time, in a camp environment, the first suspicion is probably what we call a norovirus. This is the same virus that hits cruise ships," said Dr. Thomas Felger. "Now it still could be from contaminated food," he added.

Felger said they won't know what the cause is until lab test are back and that should take about 48 hours.

In the mean time he said the norovirus is very "hardy" and lives for a long time outside of the body, so to get rid of it you need to thoroughly clean the surrounding area.

"Typically chlorine bleach of some sort is recommended for as many surfaces as you can get to," said Felger.

And that's just what the university spent the day doing on Wednesday.

"We are going through some of the dorms, sterilizing, cleaning things up and

then we're going to move some of the camps that are moving in tomorrow to other dorms, so we're doing everything we can to try to stop this continuing," said Spokesperson Dennis Brown.

Brown said five dorms are being cleaned along with number of common areas,

He said this is the first time he can remember a large illness breaking out during a sports camp on campus.

As of 3 p.m. Wednesday, Brown said two kids were still at an area hospital and should be released on Thursday.

Initially 15 kids were taken to Memorial Hospital and 14 were treated at Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center.

For the health department, Felger said the concern now is that many of the kids are fanning out and are taking that virus with them.

"To be honest our biggest concern is these young folks are scattering all over the country right now so we have no idea what the final total could be," said Felger.

The doctor said if you're having these symptoms the biggest risk is dehydration. So make sure to drink lots of water, don't prepare food for anyone, and try to stay away from others.

To read the full press release from the university, [click here](#).

ABC 57 News also spoke to parents whose children were affected by the gastrointestinal illness. One parent shared a letter with us that was sent to them from the university about the sickness those campers experienced.

It notes the following preventative measures that should be taken:

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
Avoid sharing equipment such as water bottles, mouth guards and eating utensils.

To review the complete letter that was sent home to parents, [click here](#)