



# NEWS

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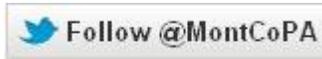
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## **MCHD Investigating Outbreak of Stomach Illness at Ursinus College**

**Norristown, PA (February 10, 2016)** – Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) is currently investigating an outbreak of gastro-intestinal illness associated with students from Ursinus College.

Yesterday evening a number of students at Ursinus College became ill. Symptoms included diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain, and a number of students went to the hospital or to urgent care centers for treatment. The Montgomery County Health Department has asked local health care providers evaluating students to conduct testing immediately.

As of now, Ursinus College is aware of 88 students who have become ill, 22 of whom have sought treatment at local hospitals and urgent care centers.

“I encourage any students or staff experiencing symptoms including diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain to be particularly careful about dehydration and to seek medical care,” said Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Interim Medical Director of the Montgomery County Health Department.

It is unknown at this time whether the illness is food-borne or transmitted by person-to-person contact. MCHD is interviewing students and employees and looking at all possible sources of infection and looking

for any commonalities.

Routinely, it is recommended to test for both bacteria and viruses when persons present with these symptoms. Testing results could take up to a week.

Ursinus College is working closely with MCHD to determine the cause of the illness. College students or staff who experiences symptoms can contact the Ursinus College Wellness Center ([wellness@ursinus.edu](mailto:wellness@ursinus.edu)) or come in during regular hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. UC EMS will be available 24/7 for assistance; contact Campus Safety at 610-409-3333.

It is common at this time of year for gastrointestinal illnesses (GI), such as Norovirus, more commonly known as the stomach bug, to be circulating in the community, particularly in institutions like colleges and long-term care facilities where people are living in close quarters.

“The best way to prevent the spread GI illness is to practice good hand-hygiene and to thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces in common areas,” said Dr. Arkoosh.