



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311

Frank X. Custer, Communications Director

Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant

PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX (610) 278-5943

COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair*

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, *Vice Chair*

JOSEPH C. GALE, *Commissioner*



Ursinus College

Esmé Artz
Media Relations Manager
earzt@ursinus.edu
610-409-3535

RELEASE: February 10, 2016

UPDATE: Ursinus College Voluntarily Closes Cafeteria MCHD Investigation of Stomach Illness Outbreak Continues

Norristown, PA (February 10, 2016) – Ursinus College has been working closely with Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) officials to investigate an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness on campus. The college has voluntarily closed the cafeteria and snack bar allowing MCHD officials to continue gathering information regarding the illness cluster. The request is prudent and precautionary until further information is gathered.

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 Wednesday afternoon, Ursinus College was aware of 100 students who became ill, 22 of whom 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) 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.