Self-Care for Gastroenteritis (Stomach Bug)

- The most common causes of nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea are viral infections. Symptoms may also include crampy abdominal pain.
- Viral illnesses are typically self-limiting. Most people start to improve within 24 hours and feel back to normal within 72 hours of onset of illness.
- Most stomach bugs can be treated at home and do not require a visit to a healthcare facility.
- If you have a stomach bug, you should perform an at-home COVID test or see a medical provider for testing. If you test positive for COVID, follow the latest CDC isolation guidelines.

Self-care:
- Rest
- Consume clear liquids such as water, ice chips, clear broth, popsicles, and electrolyte replacement drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade or Pedialyte.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and carbonated beverages.
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) 650 mg every 6 hours as needed for fever, chills, headache, and body aches.

Recovery:
- If vomiting and/or diarrhea has resolved, you may start bland solid foods (crackers, toast, rice etc.)
- If you can tolerate bland solid foods for 12-24 hours, add other foods as tolerated. Dairy, fried foods and highly seasoned foods should be added last.

Prevention of spread of illness to others:
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently.
- If you have a roommate, use bleach cleaners in shared areas.
- Limit social contact with others while you are symptomatic.

When to seek medical care:
- If you see blood in stool or vomit.
- Vomiting more than 24 hours.
- Diarrhea has not improved in 72 hours.
- Abdominal pain is severe.
- Experiencing signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, no urination for 8 hours, dark/concentrated urine, dizziness/lightheadedness when standing or walking.
- Persistent fever.