



## Nearly 100 sick passengers onboard Seattle cruise ship

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SEATTLE - A viral outbreak sickened nearly 100 people on a Seattle-based cruise ship.

Disembarking passenger Kym Boisvert says her cabin on the "Sapphire Princess" was across the hall from infected passengers.

"You go on vacation, you pay quite a lot of money for this. It'd be nice if they gave you the courtesy, or at least get the sick people off," said Boisvert.

The outbreak compelled Boisvert and her husband, from San Diego, to curtail their ship board activities.

"We didn't mingle with anyone on the boat because we didn't want to get sick, so we pretty much stayed to our room."

Julie Benson, a spokesperson for Princess Cruises, identified this as an outbreak of Norovirus, a highly contagious but common gastrointestinal virus that can cause vomiting and diarrhea.

Via phone from corporate headquarters in Santa Carita, Benson confirmed that 96 passengers sought medical attention on this returning seven-day Alaska trip. She said the crew designated what's called a "red level," calling for the implementation of the highest sanitary precautions. Benson discouraged the use of the word "quarantine," but did say that crew asked sick passengers to stay in their rooms. Staff took other visible precautions.

"All the time people were wearing latex gloves. They were being very careful and they made you sanitize your hands before you went into the food area and you weren't allowed to touch any of the food utensils," said passenger Cindy Hedum from Minneapolis.

Passenger Joyce Jordan from Redding, Calif. said she did not personally worry about getting infected.

"I took all the precautions, I washed my hands a lot," said Jordan.

After passengers disembarked, Benson says the crew went into "super-sanitize" mode, giving themselves an extra two hours to clean the empty ship before new passengers got on board at Terminal 91.

Seattle-based longshoreman, who serve in a variety of shore side functions for cruise ships, said they were notified of the outbreak.

"We're wearing gloves, latex gloves," said longshoreman Rodney Liverman. "You just take precautions. We're handling money, touching luggage, dealing with people."

His colleague, longshoreman Robert Bowen added, "If people are really, really concerned, they have the masks."

Benson said passengers probably unknowingly carried Norovirus on board where it quickly spread. On Sunday afternoon, a whole new group of more than 2,000 passengers prepared to sail away, most knowing nothing of the outbreak during the previous cruise on the same ship.

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