

PRESS RELEASE

St. Maarten, 19.03.2016

Infectious Illness reported on Norwegian Gem. Passengers and Crew not allowed to Disembark in the interests of Public Health

March 19, 2016 – On Friday, March 18, a number of passengers on-board Norwegian Gem Cruise Ship was infected with an infectious virus. The vessel was boarded outside Port St. Maarten and was boarded by a Port Control Team that also included officials from the Ministry of Public Health and the Shipping & Maritime Authority, to gather further information with respect to the on-board virus.

While onboard, the Port Control Team were informed of additional cases, and based on this information and after further evaluation, it was decided in the interests of public health that the passengers and crew should not disembark. The causative agent at the time of inspection was unknown and the Captain was advised to return to homeport for vessel sanitation procedures.

The cruise ship industry from time to time suffers from the spread of gastrointestinal illnesses, and the Norovirus is a very contagious virus and the one that is most prominent. You can get the virus from an infected person, from contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus causes your stomach or intestines or both to get inflamed (acute gastroenteritis). This leads you to have stomach pain, nausea, and diarrhea and to throw up.

The Norwegian Gem which was outside Port St. Maarten left after the decision of the Port Control Team was made.

Norovirus outbreaks on cruise ships are common, and according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), outbreaks are found and reported more quickly on a cruise ship than on land.

The Norwegian Gem was the newest cruise ship in Norwegian Cruise Line's fleet until the debut of Norwegian Epic. The vessel came into service in 2007 and has a gross tonnage of 93,530; is 965 feet in length; has 15 decks; carries 2384 passengers and 1154 crew.

The Norwegian Gem is the fourth of Norwegian's Jewel class.

For further questions, please contact: comments@portofstmaarten.com