

Managing Outbreaks of Gastroenteritis in Residential Care Facilities

The complete guideline is available online at: <http://www.fraserhealth.ca/services/publichealth/pages/default.aspx>
(select "Outbreak Guidelines for Care Facilities" from left side of page)

1. Notification of Public Health or Infection Control* (Action 1)

When **3 or more cases** of gastroenteritis occur **within a 4 day period**, contact:

- Public Health
 - **On weekdays 08:30 to 16:30** - FAX with phone confirmation (**FAX form reverse of this page**)
 - **On weekends or stat. holidays 08:30 to 16:30** – call Public Health answering service 604-527-4806
 - **If detected evenings or overnight** – contact as above the **NEXT** day, AND
- Your facility Medical Director (if applicable), **OR**
- Your Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) if the outbreak is within a Fraser Health-owned facility (see note below).*

2. Implementation of Outbreak Control Measures (Action 2)

If Public Health or Infection Control declares a suspect outbreak, establish outbreak control measures:

- Confine ill residents to their rooms until at least 48 hours after symptoms have ended
- Exclude any ill employees from work until at least 48 hours after symptoms have ended
- In addition to **standard precautions**, use **transmission based precautions** when caring for ill residents
 - Gloves - for providing any direct care
 - Gowns - when contamination of care giver's clothing is possible
 - Masks (standard procedure type) - when there is a risk of droplet spread into the air of infectious material (i.e. cleaning up areas grossly contaminated with feces or vomitus)
- Avoid the transfer of well residents to a room containing an ill resident
- Review hand hygiene procedures with all staff (including volunteers)
- Ensure surfaces contaminated by feces or vomitus are immediately cleaned and disinfected
- Implement a program of increased cleaning and disinfection of common touch surfaces (such as door handles, handrails, light switches, chair arms, sink/toilet handles, etc) with a disinfectant effective against viral causes of gastroenteritis
- Ensure soiled laundry is handled as little as possible, with minimum agitation, and transported in closed bags, prior to washing and drying
- Advise visitors of the outbreak and appropriate personal precautions; limit their visit to one person
- Consider:
 - postponing transfers to other facilities and admissions/re-admissions unless medically warranted
 - using cohort nursing or similar practices to reduce the potential of spread from ill to well residents
 - decreasing or discontinuing group activities and outings until the outbreak is over
- Implement other measures deemed appropriate by your ICP* or Medical Director

3. Maintenance of Detailed Surveillance --- Monitoring (Action 3)

- Maintain GI illness surveillance for both residents and staff.
- Forward by FAX updated surveillance forms (*Appendix B and C* of Guidelines) to Public Health daily (FAX form on reverse of this page). For Fraser Health owned facilities, fax surveillance forms to Infection Control as directed.

4. Collection of Specimens --- Lab Testing (Action 4)

- Collect stool or vomitus specimens in any empty (i.e. non-preserved) sterile container, or use the containers provided by Public Health. Phone Public Health or your ICP when you have samples ready to ship
- Discuss with Public Health or your ICP the method of shipment of specimens to the BCCDC lab. **You will need the "BCCDC GI Outbreak Requisition" before you ship any specimens. Do not ship through your normal private or hospital lab services unless advised by Public Health.**
- Collect specimens as per directions on the BACK of the requisition. Ensure each specimen container is labeled with the person's name and date of collection, and that the requisition is complete
- Store specimens cool (10-20 Deg C.) or refrigerated unless otherwise advised by Public Health or ICP
- Collect no more than 6 specimens unless advised by Public Health or your ICP*
- Note that identification of the cause of the outbreak is most likely if:
 - A specimen is collected soon after symptoms first appear: AND
 - The specimen is delivered to the lab as soon as possible after collection

***NOTE:** for outbreaks in Fraser Health Owned and Operated facilities (hospitals and associated residential care facilities), notify your Infection Control Practitioner, who will provide guidance, declare the outbreak if appropriate, and notify Public Health. You DO NOT need to contact Public Health directly unless the outbreak begins on a weekend or statutory holiday. All other facilities (private and contracted) will deal directly with Public Health.
(Public Health phone/fax numbers on reverse)

Urgent FAX

Gastroenteritis Outbreak Notification or Update to Public Health

*For Fraser Health Owned and Operated Facilities, FAX to your Infection Control Practitioner

Date: _____

pages faxed: _____

Facility Sending Report: _____

Facility Address: _____

Facility Contact Person: _____

Facility Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Where to FAX this notification:

| For facilities located in: | Public Health office: |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody Anmore, Belcarra | Phone 604-949-7700 Fax 604-949-7706 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Surrey, Surrey Guildford, North Delta, South Delta, New Westminster | Phone 604-507-5478 Fax 604-507-5492 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey Newton, Surrey Cloverdale, South Surrey, White Rock, Langley | Phone 604-587 7610 Fax 604-587 7615 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Mission, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Agassiz, Harrison, Hope, Boston Bar | Phone 604-870-7900 Fax 604-870-7901 |

We are reporting:

Suspect Outbreak: _____ Outbreak Update: _____ Outbreak Over: _____

For initial report of suspect outbreak, please provide:

Number of residents ill: _____ Total beds/current occupancy: ____/____

Number of Staff ill: _____ Number of Staff that work in facility: _____

Onset date of first case: _____

Typical Symptoms: _____

Other information: _____

Important: Use this form to notify Public Health weekdays between 08:00 and 16:30.

Telephone the Public Health Office to confirm receipt of this FAX.

For weekends and statutory holidays, between 08:30 and 16:30, contact the Fraser Health Public Health answering service at 604-527-4806.

If detected during evening or overnight hours, contact as above the NEXT day.