

# Gastrointestinal (Enteric) Outbreak Management Guidelines for Child Care Centres

## GASTROINTESTINAL OUTBREAK:

An outbreak consists of two or more children and/or staff with similar gastrointestinal symptoms within a specific program area within a 48-hour period. These individuals are considered cases.

## CASE OF GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS:

A case of gastrointestinal illness experiences one of the following:

- **two or more** episodes of unformed or watery stool (diarrhea) within a 24-hour period, OR
- **two or more** episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period, OR
- **one episode** of unformed or watery stool (diarrhea) and **one episode** of vomiting within a 24-hour period, OR
- **lab confirmed case** of a known pathogen and at least one compatible symptom (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or tenderness).

**NOTE:** Diarrhea is defined as a loose watery stool that if placed into a container would take the form of the container OR is completely absorbed into a diaper.

Rule out other non-infectious causes; antibiotic/medication use.

**Please contact the public health inspector assigned to your centre at 625-5930 or toll-free 1-888-294-6630 ext. 5930.**

## GASTROINTESTINAL OUTBREAK CONTROL MEASURES:

- Increase hand hygiene
- Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfecting AND clean/disinfect high touch areas twice daily.
- Exclude ill staff from work for at least 48 hours after gastrointestinal symptoms disappear. If the causative agent is identified by lab, apply disease specific exclusions).
- Isolate ill children until parent/guardian arrives. Exclude children with gastrointestinal symptoms for 48 hours after symptoms disappear.
- Post outbreak signs at all entrances.
- Cohort staff. Minimize movement of staff between affected and unaffected program areas. Ensure there is no movement of staff to other sites operated by the outbreak child care centre
- Reinforce outbreak control measures with staff and children
- Discuss with parents the importance of keeping ill children home; for example 48 hours after symptoms disappear.
- Ensure no group activities take place between affected areas
- Stop all water and sensory play. Discard any sensory play material that may have been used (i.e. Playdoh®, rice, cotton balls, etc).
- Cancel all activities/trips/outings planned for the affected area or areas of the child care centre. This includes visits to nursing homes, other schools/daycare site and other program areas.

## REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Start a line list of symptomatic children and a separate line list for symptomatic staff.
- Follow up with parents of ill children to gather information about their symptoms and reason for being away.
- Implement outbreak control measures.
- Contact the public health inspector assigned to your centre.
- Follow your centre's procedures for notifying staff members of the outbreak.
- Encourage parents/guardians to take children to see physician and have stool or any other appropriate samples taken.
- Continue line listing all who have symptoms (children or staff) **OR** meet the established case definition. A case definition will be set with the public health inspector.
- Contact the public health inspector every 24 hours to update the line list.

## DECLARING A GASTROINTESTINAL OUTBREAK OVER:

An outbreak is declared over 5 days after the resolved date of the last line listed child

**An outbreak is declared in joint consultation between the child care centre and the Health Unit**