



Public Health  
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## GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS OR NOROVIRUS OUTBREAK Control Measure Recommendations for Long Term Care Facilities

Control measures should be continued until the **outbreak is over, typically 96 hours after the last onset of diarrhea and/or vomiting in residents or staff**. An onsite inspection maybe conducted if: we suspect the outbreak is due to other causes, such as a food-borne illness; an ill resident or staff has a notifiable condition (i.e. E. coli or salmonella); or the outbreak does not resolve as expected. Facilities should also notify their licensor of the outbreak and initiation of control measures.

### Control Spread within Your Facility:

- Serve meals in rooms for ill residents and use disposable dinnerware.
- Post signs indicating the “dining room is closed” until the outbreak is over.
- Post signs in common areas that discourage resident congregation.
- Restrict socialization by residents—refrain from holding social events in the facility until the outbreak has ended.
- Ensure that ill residents stay in their own rooms until 48 hours after last symptoms.
- Exclude ill staff for 48 hours after last symptoms.
- No visitors to the facility until the outbreak has ended.
- No new admissions to the facility until the outbreak has ended.
- Do not transfer any residents to other facilities, unless for acute medial necessity.
- Refrain from putting out bowls of unwrapped foods for residents to select from, such as fresh fruit and cookies.
- Have hand sanitizer at all common / social gathering areas / family gathering rooms.

### Control Spread of Illness from Your Facility to the Community

- Post Clark County Public Health signs at facility entrances that state: “Clark County Public Health Recommends No Visitors at This Time”. Signs shall be in place until the outbreak has. Include postings at residential rooms (such as independent living rooms) in which visitors may not enter the front entrance to your facility.
- Postpone non-urgent services that are provided by individuals who enter the facility and non-urgent appointments, such as hair appointments.
- If ill or well residents request to go home to stay with friends or family, provide the family with a written information sheet that gives information about the outbreak and the necessary control measures. A sample letter is contained in your information packet.

- If residents are transported to the hospital because of diarrhea and/or vomiting, please contact the hospital emergency department to notify them that the patient is coming from a facility with a gastrointestinal disease outbreak. If an ambulance service or transportation bus/service plans to transport the ill resident to the hospital, please also notify them of the outbreak prior to their arrival at your facility.
- Hospitalized residents may return to your facility. Please notify the residents' health care provider of the outbreak to be sure they are aware and can provide monitoring of the patient if needed.
- If you have staff that work at other residential facilities, please be sure the employee notifies them of this outbreak. If the employee experiences diarrhea or vomiting, it is extremely important they do not work at either facility until 48 hours have passed since their last symptoms occurred.

### General Cleaning Instructions:

During an outbreak, 24/7 residential facilities should clean at minimum every shift. Pay special attention to areas such as:

- **Hard surfaces commonly touched:** kitchens, bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces such as: toilet flush levers, sink faucets handles, toilet room stall doors, hall hand rails, all parts of bedside commodes, common bathing tubs, common laundry tubs areas, light switches, handicap push pads, front door handles, push plates, mail boxes - **whatever hands touch!!!**
- **Social common areas** and surfaces such as: piano keys, bingo stampers, bingo cards, computer key board, phone, ATM machine key pads, exercise balls and equipment, soda pop machine buttons.
- Occupational or physical therapy equipment.

### Preparing and Using the Bleach Solution:

Chlorine solution (sodium hypochlorite) is the most effective product for killing viruses such as noro and noro-like viruses. Bleach solution dissipates after 24 hours, rendering it too weak to adequately kill viruses. Thus needs to be made up fresh to maintain potency. In an outbreak, it's recommend that it is made up every 8 hours.

- Hard surfaces use **1/3 cup household bleach to 1 gallon water.**
- Contaminated surfaces (with vomit or stool) use a stronger bleach solution for disinfection: **2 cups household bleach to 1 gallon water.**
- Use protective goggles, surgical masks and gloves when using bleach.
- Allow the bleach to air dry on the surface being cleaned (approximately 10 min.).
- Do not mix bleach with other cleaning agents because of the risk of toxicity.
- Quaternary ammonium compounds should not be used as disinfectants to control outbreaks of diarrhea or vomiting. However, for fabrics such solutions can be used for odor control, as long as steam cleaning follows.

### Clean up Vomit or Diarrhea/Stool Immediately:

- When cleaning up vomit or diarrhea, always wear appropriate protective equipment - gloves, mask, eye protection as these excretions can be infectious.
- Move people out of the area needing to be cleaned because of aerosols and put up caution cones to keep people away until the area has been sanitized.
- Discard large particles into a plastic trash bag and seal or tie off.
- Cover the solid spot with absorbent material as soon as possible (paper towel, absorbent granules).

- **Hard surfaces/colorfast**
  - Cover effective area with bleach
  - Leave sanitizer on for at least 10 minutes
- **Carpeted surfaces/fabric furniture/not colorfast**
  - If bleach solution cannot be used on fabrics, steam clean (heat inactivation) at 160 degrees for 5 minutes. Use a stem thermometer to monitor this temperature.
- Put all contaminated material into plastic trash bags including gloves and mask. Place the trash bag in a second trash bag and seal or tie and move to an outside dumpster as soon as possible. Liquids to be poured down the mop sink in the custodian room, not hand wash sinks or kitchen sinks.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water after removing gloves and masks.

### Laundry Concerns

- Put all linens and laundry contaminated with vomitus or stools in marked plastic bags.
- Ensure segregation of regular and contaminated laundry.
- Wash these items in the hottest water.
- Use bleach on the rinse cycle if color safe items.
- Laundry soiled with vomitus or stools should be laundered at the facility, not sent home with residents' family. For staff, if taken home, it should be bagged and care should be taken to prevent exposure to individuals in the car or at home.
- Employees and volunteers should have an extra set of clothing to wear home in the event their clothing becomes contaminated while at work.

### Conduct Disease Surveillance

- Please conduct active surveillance of diarrhea and vomiting in residents and staff. When 96 hours have passed after the last onset, your outbreak is over. Watch for signs of new onsets and implement control measures if they occur.
- Report ongoing episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea in residents to their medical provider immediately to prevent cases of rapid dehydration

### Additional Control Measures That May be Required by the Health Officer

- Restrict access to kitchen to food staff only
- Kitchen staff shall not deliver food trays to resident rooms.
- Food cart shall not enter resident rooms. After delivering food trays to residents, wash wheels and outside of food cart with bleach solution before returning to the kitchen.

Thank you for your partnership, if you have questions please call our Communicable Disease Unit at (360) 397-8182.

*For additional information visit the CDC Norovirus webpage:*

<http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/index.html>