



Checklist for Schools Experiencing a GI Outbreak

Recognition, Reporting & Testing

- Upon suspicion of a norovirus outbreak, notify Maine CDC by calling 1-800-821-5821 or emailing disease.reporting@maine.gov (please no patient information)
- Obtain an outbreak number from Field Epidemiologists for identification purposes: #_____
- Maintain a line listing of symptomatic students and staff
- Recommend and/or submit 3-5 specimens from affected students and staff as soon as an outbreak is suspected
- Follow Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) guidelines for specimen collection, handling, and transport; label specimens with Outbreak #
- Outbreak is consider resolved when 96 hours (2 incubation periods) has elapsed from last onset of symptoms

Control Measures:

Infection Control:

- Exclude any ill staff or student from school setting and school related activities
- Minimize the number of group activities, such as parties and field trips, until the outbreak is over
- Enforce strict hand hygiene for all staff and students, including washing hands with soap and water after contamination with vomit or feces
- Supplement hand washing with soap and water with ethanol or alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Implement cleaning procedures in buses and other vehicles used for official school transportation
- Food service staff should not handle food if they have been recently ill with any gastrointestinal symptoms until they can be interviewed/further evaluated by public health professionals.

Environmental Controls:

- Clean all high traffic areas and high touch items (faucets, door handles, and toilet or bath rails)
- Use EPA-registered disinfectants or detergents/disinfectants approved for use against norovirus for routine cleaning and disinfection
- Clean soiled carpets and soft furnishings with hot water and detergent or steam clean as appropriate
- Handle soiled linens carefully using appropriate infection control precautions
- Conduct thorough cleaning of affected personal and communal areas 48 hours after resolution of the last case

Administrative Controls:

- Exclude ill food staff from work for at least 48 hours after symptoms have resolved
- Minimize group activities as much as possible until after the outbreak is contained. Consider risks/benefits of limiting salad bars and areas of food service that enhance hand touching
- Post signage about the outbreak and proper hand hygiene

Internal and External Communications

- Identify a single point of contact for internal communications
- Identify a single point of contact for external communications
- Notify staff of outbreak and control measures and conduct enhanced surveillance for ill staff
- Notify parents and guardians of the outbreak, control measures taken, to watch for symptoms, and request the school nurse be notified of gastrointestinal illness
- Consider a final communication to staff, students, parents, and guardians when the outbreak has resolved