



What visitor precautions/restrictions are necessary? (cont'd)

- Visitors may be required to wear gloves, gown and mask as directed by nursing staff
- Visiting of more than one patient/resident and visiting by outside groups is not permitted
- Do not bring in any food from outside sources

During an outbreak, it is very important for visitors to follow the visiting precautions/restrictions.

These precautions/restrictions are put in place to protect patients, residents and visitors.

There is a potential risk that visitors may acquire the illness within the facility.

If you require more information, please call the nursing unit where your family member is a patient/resident.

REMIND VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR HANDS

Hand Hygiene

Special care must be paid to **hand hygiene**, as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. **Good hand hygiene includes:**

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

- Apply to palm of one hand
- Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers
- Rub until hands feel dry
- If hands are visibly dirty you must wash them before using Alcohol Based Hand Rub

Hand Washing:

- Use warm running water and soap
- Spend at least 15-30 seconds lathering and washing hands
- Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, around rings and thumbs
- Rinse thoroughly
- Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel
- Dispose of paper towel in the garbage

***IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES,
DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH
CARE PROVIDERS IF THEY HAVE
CLEANED THEIR HANDS***

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Gastroenteritis Outbreak Management

***Information for
Patients, Residents,
Families and Visitors***

**INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM**

What is gastroenteritis?

- Gastroenteritis is an infection that affects the stomach and intestines. Symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, weakness and headache
- For most people it is a mild illness. However, people in hospitals and long term care (LTC) are at risk of becoming dehydrated if they are not able to drink enough fluids to replace fluids lost through vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Treatment of this illness is aimed at relieving symptoms and preventing dehydration

What is Norovirus and Rotavirus?

- Noroviruses and rotaviruses are germs that cause gastroenteritis. They are found in the vomit or stool of infected people
- There are many types of noroviruses which can affect people of any age
- Rotavirus is most common in infants and young children but can also affect older children and adults
- Most outbreaks are caused by noroviruses but sometimes outbreaks can be caused by rotaviruses as well as other germs. These germs can spread rapidly in enclosed settings like hospitals and nursing homes

How is gastroenteritis spread?

You can get gastroenteritis through:

- Contact with vomit or stool from an infected person
- Contact with items that are contaminated with vomit or stool
- Consuming contaminated food, water or ice

What is an outbreak of gastroenteritis?

An outbreak is usually declared when there are at least two or more cases of gastroenteritis within 48 hours on a nursing unit.

Why are control measures necessary?

Control measures are necessary to prevent the spread of gastroenteritis within the hospital or LTC homes. During an outbreak, control measures focus on:

- Implementing visitor precautions or restrictions on a nursing unit or the entire building, depending on the severity of the outbreak
- Restricting movement of staff within the building
- Restricting patients/residents to their rooms/units where possible
- Canceling all group activities
- Reinforcing routine infection control precautions, such as good hand hygiene and the use of contact precautions
- More frequent cleaning of environmental surfaces

What visitor precautions are necessary?

Efforts will be made to avoid complete restriction of visiting as it may cause hardship for patients/residents and their families. However, it may be necessary in some cases depending on the severity of the outbreak.

During an outbreak, visiting (one visitor per patient/resident) may be permitted with the following restrictions:

- Visitors do not have the symptoms of gastroenteritis
- Visitors must check at the nursing station for information regarding any precautions that are necessary
- Visitors must visit in the patient/resident's room, not in a common area
- Visitors must go directly to the patient/resident's room, visit that person only and exit the building immediately after the visit
- Visitors must clean their hands on arrival and on leaving the patient/resident's room