

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 client/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 clients, residents, staff, 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 client/resident.

**HAND HYGIENE
THE BEST
WAY TO PREVENT
INFECTION**



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

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

Hand Washing

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. 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.**

**ASK VISITORS IF THEY HAVE WASHED
THEIR HANDS.**



Gastroenteritis Outbreak Management

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

INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM
www.easternhealth.ca

WHAT IS GASTROENTERITIS?

- Gastroenteritis is an infection that affects the stomach and intestines. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, weakness, and headache.
- For most individuals it is a mild illness; however, individuals 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 individuals.
- There are many types of noroviruses which can affect individuals 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?

- Contact with vomit or stool from an infected individual.
- 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 (2) 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 clients/residents to their rooms/units where possible.
- Canceling all group activities.

- More frequent cleaning of environmental surfaces.
- Reinforcing routine infection control precautions, such as good hand hygiene and the use of contact precautions.

WHAT VISITOR PRECAUTIONS ARE NECESSARY?

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

During an outbreak, visiting may be permitted with the following restrictions:

- The number of visitors may need to be reduced depending on the severity of the outbreak.
- 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 client/resident in their room, not in a common area.
- Visitors must go directly to the client's/resident's room, visit that individual only, and exit the building immediately after the visit.
- Visitors must clean their hands on arrival and on leaving the client's/resident's room.