



**NL Health  
Services**

Infection Prevention and  
Control

## FACT SHEET

# Visiting During Outbreaks



### What is an outbreak?

An outbreak of respiratory or gastrointestinal (GI) illness occurs when there are two (2) or more clients/residents on a unit experiencing the same symptoms or one (1) case of a novel/unusual disease.

### How is the spread of infectious disease reduced in a unit/facility?

- Isolation protocols: clients/residents are contained in their rooms.
- Control of movement: movement of staff between units is restricted.
- Environmental cleaning protocols are enhanced.
- Social gatherings are restricted or cancelled during outbreaks.
- Visitation will be assessed based on the severity of the outbreak.

### What are visitor precautions?

Visitor precautions are a series of infection control measures that are implemented as a method of reducing the risk of spreading infectious diseases (i.e., influenza, norovirus, etc.) and are designed to help keep clients/residents, families, staff, and visitors safe.

### What do visitor precautions mean?

When precautions signage is present on a door, facility, or unit this means:

- Do not visit if you are ill.
- Check with the nursing desk before you visit clients/residents.
- Wash your hands before entering the unit/room and when leaving.
- Personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, or gowns) must be worn for the duration of your visit.

### Will visiting be completely restricted?

Visiting may be reduced if the organism causing the outbreak cannot be contained. It will be the responsibility of the site manager to determine with Infection Control whether visitation will be restricted.

### When will visiting restrictions be lifted?

Infection control will assess the status of the outbreak on a daily basis and lift restrictions as soon as the risk to clients/residents, staff, families, and visitors has been minimized.