

GI Outbreak Management

PRACTICES AND PRECAUTIONS

- Symptomatic patients/residents/clients will remain in their room until 48 hours post symptoms
- Reinforce hand hygiene to all HCWs and ensure easy access to hand hygiene stations (soap and water, ABHR)
- Initiate and implement Contact Precautions for symptomatic patients and when providing direct care for symptomatic patients
- Implement Contact and Droplet Precautions if patient is actively vomiting or when cleaning up areas grossly contaminated by vomitus and feces
- Wash hands and wear appropriate PPE (gloves, gown and 120mmHG fluid repellent surgical mask with attached visor) when entering a patient room or bed-space to provide direct care or contact with the patient environment
- All PPE must be removed and hand hygiene performed before leaving the patient's room
- Place signage on the patient's room door indicating that Contact Precautions are required

COLLECT STOOL SPECIMENS

- From patients/residents/clients who are acutely ill with GI symptoms, preferably within 24-48 hours of onset of symptoms
- Collect one stool specimen from up to 6 symptomatic patients/residents
- This number of specimens is usually sufficient to determine the etiology of the outbreak
- Transport specimens to the laboratory as soon as possible using established methods for transporting STAT laboratory specimens

GI Outbreak Management (continued)

HOW TO COLLECT STOOL SPECIMENS

- Gather supplies including a dry specimen container and a clean tongue depressor or plastic spoon
- Pre-label specimen container accurately including patient information and date of collection
- Perform hand hygiene and don appropriate PPE
- Scoop the specimen into the container with a disposable tongue depressor or plastic spoon
- Fill the container with stool up to one third or approximately one-tablespoon full
- Keep the outside of the container clean, screw the lid tightly onto the plastic container
- Open biohazard bag to drop the specimen container into and seal
- Remove PPE appropriately and perform hand hygiene
- Send the specimen to the laboratory

MANAGEMENT OF RELAPSE CASES

- GI infection cases often relapse (i.e. experience onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea after being asymptomatic for 24-48 hours). This relapse is often due to malabsorption during an existing norovirus infection
- Place patient on droplet precautions until they are free of vomiting and/or diarrhea for 48 hours
- Should NOT be counted as new outbreak cases (and, therefore, should NOT be included on daily line listings). Relapse cases alone would not result in the extension of admission requirements
- If a previously identified GI illness case has onset of GI illness symptoms after being symptom free for at least seven (7) days, it is considered a new case