

Appendix B: Provincial Case Definitions for Diseases of Public Health Significance

**Disease: Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Institutions and
Public Hospitals**

Effective: May 2018

Disease

1.0 Provincial Reporting

Confirmed outbreaks

2.0 Type of Surveillance

Outbreak summary data

3.0 Case Classification

3.1 Confirmed Outbreak Definition

Two or more cases meeting the case definition with a common epidemiological link (e.g. specific unit or floor, same caregiver) with initial onset within a 48 hour period.

3.2 Suspect Outbreak Definition

If an outbreak is suspected, notify the local board of health to support with the investigation and management.

3.3 Case Definition

The case definition in an outbreak is dependent on the presenting signs and symptoms and circumstances. It may vary between outbreaks and also vary during an outbreak.

Symptoms must not be attributed to another cause (e.g. medication side effects, laxatives, diet or prior medical condition) and are not present or incubating upon admission and **at least one** of the following must be met:

- **Two or more** episodes of diarrhea (i.e. loose/watery bowel movements) within a 24-hour period
OR
- **Two or more** episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period;
OR
- **One or more** episodes of diarrhea AND one or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period.

4.0 Laboratory Evidence

4.1 Laboratory Confirmation

- Confirmation of an outbreak of gastroenteritis is not dependent on laboratory confirmation.

4.2 Approved/Validated Tests

- Given the variability of aetiologic agent, consult with laboratory about appropriate testing methodologies.

4.3 Indications and Limitations

- N/A

5.0 Clinical Evidence

Clinically compatible signs and symptoms depend upon aetiologic agent and may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or tenderness.

6.0 ICD Code(s)

ICD 10 Code A09A

7.0 Comments

- The board of health shall declare whether an outbreak is over, in consultation with the institution/facility. Rationale for declaring or not declaring an outbreak, and declaring an outbreak over should be documented.
- In the event of a disagreement between the institution and the MOH, the MOH has the authority to determine if an outbreak of a communicable disease exists, for purposes of exercising statutory powers under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. Once an outbreak is declared, it is reported to the Ministry through the integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS).
- The board of health shall declare whether an outbreak is over, in consultation with the institution/facility. Rationale for declaring or not declaring an outbreak, and declaring an outbreak over should be documented.
- Issuing a media release to the public is the responsibility of the institution or health facility. Should there be a public health risk to the general population, a joint media alert may be issued, or the public health unit may issue an alert on behalf of the institution or health facility with their knowledge.
- For more information, please consult Investigation and Management of Infectious Diseases Outbreaks in the *Infectious Disease Protocol, 2018* (or as current) and the *Institution/Facility Outbreak Management Protocol, 2018* (or as current).

8.0 Sources

Heymann DL, editor. Control of Communicable Diseases Manual. 20 ed. Washington, D.C: American Public Health Association; 2015.

Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2018. Available from:

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Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best Practices for Surveillance of Health Care-associated Infections in Patient and Resident Populations. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014. Available from:

https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/PIDAC/Pages/PIDAC_Documents.aspx

9.0 Document History

Table 1: History of Revisions

Revision Date	Document Section	Description of Revisions
April 2015	General	New template. Section 9.0 Document History added.
April 2015	1.0 Provincial Reporting	Added: “(non <i>Clostridium difficile</i> Infection (CDI) related outbreaks)”.
April 2015	3.2 Suspected Outbreak Definition	Entire section added.
April 2015	7.0 Comments	Entire section revised.
April 2015	8.0 Sources	Title of section revised from “References”. Sources updated.
August 2015	1.0 Provincial Reporting	Removal of “(non <i>Clostridium difficile</i> Infection (CDI) related outbreaks)”.
April 2018	General	Updates reflect changes to the Disease of Public Health Significance list and the addition of public hospitals, effective May 1, 2018.

