

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (36) in DH SEB CD/8/39/1

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

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Dear Principle / Person-in-charge,

Recent increase in noroviral gastroenteritis

Winter is the peak season for norovirus activity. So far in December, we have recorded 20 outbreaks caused by norovirus affecting 204 persons were recorded so far in December as compared with 12 outbreaks affecting 102 persons in the whole November. Sentinel surveillance based at residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE) also showed elevated activity of acute diarrhoeal disease. To this end, I would like to bring to your attention to the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in your school / centre.

Viral gastroenteritis, commonly caused by norovirus, is a frequent cause of outbreaks in institutions such as schools, kindergartens, child care centres, and elderly homes. Norovirus infections are usually mild and self-limiting. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever and malaise. The infection can spread through the consumption of contaminated food or direct contact with the vomitus or excreta of infected persons.

To prevent outbreak of viral gastroenteritis in your institution, strict personal, food and environmental hygiene is very important and the following steps are recommended:

1. Remind children/students and staff to maintain personal hygiene practices especially proper hand-washing using liquid soap before meals and after going to toilet.
2. Remind children/students and staff and their family members to maintain proper food hygiene. Ensure all food is adequately cooked especially high risk food like shellfish.
3. Follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Child Care Centres / Kindergartens / Schools](#) to keep the environment clean and hygienic.



4. Train staff on proper management and disinfection of the environment after vomiting incidents:
- Keep children/students away from the area during the cleaning process;
 - Wear gloves and mask while cleaning the vomitus;
 - Use disposable towels (do not use floor mops) to wipe away all the vomitus from outside inward, before applying diluted bleach 1:49 to the surface and neighbouring area (say within two metres of the vomitus);
 - Leave for about 30 minutes to allow the bleach to inactivate viruses in the vomitus before rinsing with water and mopping dry;
 - Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
 - Maintain good indoor ventilation.

In addition, please advise the staff and students in your centre/schools to adhere to personal, environmental and food hygiene while traveling to prevent contracting gastroenteritis.

Staff/students/children developing vomiting or diarrhoea should be advised to refrain from work/school and seek medical advice. If you notice an increase in the number of staff/students/children with symptoms of acute gastroenteritis, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772. CHP will give advice on the management of such cases and control measures.

For more information on norovirus, please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Yours sincerely,



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