

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (24) in DH SEB CD/8/39/1

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

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6 July 2006

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

### Vigilance against Noroviral Gastroenteritis

We would like to draw your attention to an unusual increase in noroviral gastroenteritis outbreaks in recent two months. In 2005, there were a total of 42 norovirus outbreaks in institutions, affecting 643 persons. This year, a total of 118 institutional norovirus outbreaks, involving 1439 persons, have been reported already. In particular, 85 institutional norovirus outbreaks, affecting a total of 984 persons, were reported between 1 May and 5 July. We would like to remind your institution to take the following measures to prevent norovirus infection.

Norovirus gastroenteritis is a common 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.

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/view\\_content.asp?lang=en&info\\_id=7024](http://www.chp.gov.hk/view_content.asp?lang=en&info_id=7024)

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Thomas TSANG)

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