



CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

proud past, promising future

Public Health
1601 E. Fourth Plain Blvd.
P. O. Box 9825
Vancouver, WA 98666-8825
(360) 397-8000

DATE:
TO:
FROM: Clark County Public Health

RE: Control Measures for Your Facility

In light of the recent outbreak of gastrointestinal illnesses in your facility, the following control measures have been recommended by Dr. Alan Melnick, Health Officer. The control measures will remain in effect until the Health Officer or designee notifies you that the outbreak has ended, usually 96 hours after the last occurrence of symptoms in residents and staff.

Control Spread of Illness From Your Facility to the Community

- Post Clark County Public Health signs at facility entrances that state: “Clark County Public Health Recommends No Visitors at This Time”. Signs shall be in place until the Health Officer has determined that the outbreak has ended (96 hours after last symptoms in residents and staff). Laminated signage will be provided by Public Health. Include postings at residential rooms (such as independent living rooms) in which visitors may not enter the front entrance to your facility
- Please do not accept new admissions to your facility until the outbreak is over.
- Residents will need to postpone non-urgent appointments, such as hair appointments.
- Postpone non-urgent services that are provided by individuals who enter the facility.
- Do not transfer residents to other residential facilities, unless for acute medical necessity.
- If ill or well residents request to go home to stay with friends or family, provide the family with a written information sheet that gives information about the outbreak and the necessary control measures. This will be provided by Clark County Public Health.
- If residents are transported to the hospital because of diarrhea and/or vomiting, please contact the hospital emergency department to notify them that the patient is coming from a facility with a gastrointestinal disease outbreak. If an ambulance service or transportation bus/service plans to transport the ill resident to the hospital, please also notify them of the outbreak prior to their arrival at your facility.
- If you have staff that work at other residential facilities, please be sure the employee notifies them of this outbreak. If the employee experiences diarrhea or vomiting, it is extremely important that they do not work at either facility until 48 hours have passed since their last symptoms occurred.

Control Spread Within Your Facility

- Close the dining room and serve meals in residents’ rooms.

- Post signs indicating the dining room is closed until the Health Officer has determined that the outbreak is over.
- Exclude ill staff for 48 hours after last symptoms.
- Ensure that ill residents stay in their own rooms until 48 hours after last symptoms.
- Restrict socialization by residents – refrain from holding social events in the facility until the outbreak has ended.
- Post signs in common areas that discourage resident congregation.
- Refrain from putting out bowls of unwrapped foods for residents to select from, such as fresh fruit and cookies.
- Wear gloves and surgical masks when cleaning up vomit or stool. Double bag the gloves and masks and dispose in nearest waste receptacle. If used in the rooms of symptomatic residents, please dispose before leaving the residents’ room. Wash your hands well with soap and water after removing gloves and masks.
- Laundry that is soiled with vomit or diarrhea should be bagged, stored and washed with warm water and detergent separately from laundry that has not been soiled.
- Staff clothing that has been soiled with vomit or diarrhea should be changed, bagged, and laundered separately from unsoiled laundry. If taken home, it should be bagged and care should be taken to prevent exposure to individuals in the car or at home.

Disinfection

- During an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness, use bleach solution for the disinfection of kitchens, bathrooms and other resident areas in your facility.
 - On hard surfaces, use ½ cup household bleach to 1 gallon water.
 - Disinfect surfaces, door handles, railings and other hard surfaces in the kitchens and all areas of the facility twice during each shift. Include doors at the entrance of your facility.
 - On hard surfaces that have been contaminated with vomit or stool, use a stronger bleach solution for the disinfection: 2 cups household bleach to 1 gallon water.
 - Allow the bleach to air dry, instead of wiping it off.
- Bleach solution dissipates after 24 hours, rendering it too weak to adequately kill viruses. The bleach solution needs to be made up fresh to maintain potency. In an outbreak, we recommend that it is made up every 8 hours.
- Use protective goggles, surgical masks and gloves when using bleach.
- Do not mix bleach with other cleaning agents because of the risk of toxicity.
- Follow disinfection guidelines to clean carpets or other soiled cloth areas such as couches or chairs:
 - Remove solids and debris
 - Steam clean at 160 degrees F for 5 min
 - Refrain from using a wet vacuum – use steam cleaner instead, as stated above.
 - Quaternary ammonium compounds are not found to be effective against norovirus so should not be used to control outbreaks of diarrhea or vomiting, however, can be used for odor control, as long as steam cleaning follows.

Conduct Disease Surveillance

- Clark County Public Health staff will be contacting you regularly during this outbreak by telephone and on-site visits. The purpose of this contact is to provide you with

assessments and support to decrease the spread of illness within and outside of your facility.

- Please conduct active surveillance of diarrhea and vomiting in residents and staff. Report new illnesses to Clark County Public Health by calling 397-8182.
- Report new episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea in residents to their medical provider immediately to prevent cases of rapid dehydration

Thank you for your partnership during this outbreak.