UK Health Security Agency

Children & Young People settings

Diarrhoea & Vomiting (Gastroenteritis) Action Card

To be used in conjunction with Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK

An outbreak of diarrhoea and vomiting is defined as two or more cases in a class or specific close mixing group that occurs within a 48-hour period.

Signs and symptoms	Diarrhoea and/or vomiting. For more information see Diarrhoea and vomiting - NHS.
Transmission Route	Gastrointestinal infections are spread when the germs enter the gut by the mouth or when contaminated hands or objects are put in the mouth or after eating or drinking contaminated food or drinks. Usually associated with person-to-person transmission, from aerosols of projectile vomit and from environmental contamination.
Exclusion	At least 2 clear days after their last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.
Closures	It is **not** necessary to close the school unless there are operational reasons such as significant staff absence. This would be a decision for the school in conjunction with the relevant educational authority. There is no requirement to cancel extra-curricular activities or visits. Non-essential visitors should be restricted and/or discouraged from visiting during the outbreak.
End of outbreak	Declare the outbreak over when there has been 2 clear days since the resolution of symptoms in the last known case.
Recommended actions for limiting transmission	
Hand and respiratory hygiene	• Children should be supervised and encouraged to wash their hands regularly and particularly before eating and drinking and after going to the toilet • Hand washing with liquid soap and warm water. Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus • Paper towels should be used for drying hands and a wastepaper bin provided for disposal • Everyone should wash their hands-on arrival at the setting and before leaving • Remind staff to wash their hands throughout the day. Hand washing needs to be done after changing nappies and helping children use the toilet. • e-Bug | England Home has a range of educational resources for ages 3-16 to learn about microbes, infection prevention and control, antibiotics and vaccination.
Cleaning and disinfection	• During an outbreak, enhanced or more frequent cleaning and disinfection is recommended. • Warm water and detergent should be used to clean hard surfaces followed by disinfection with a 0.1% hypochlorite solution. Bleach or Milton are the recommended disinfectants (at 1000ppm), as they will kill both bacteria and viruses. If these are unsuitable, a disinfectant that has both antibacterial and antiviral properties must be used. • Particular attention should be paid to cleaning and disinfecting toilet seats, toilet flush handles, door handles, washbasin taps, push-plates on doors, light switches, stair handrails and other frequently touched areas such as telephones, computer keyboards

	• It is recommended that toilets are cleaned at least twice a day and their condition monitored during the day, with a view to an extra clean if required • Always wear disposable apron and gloves when cleaning. Dispose after use and wash hands as above • Clothing contaminated with body fluids should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and taken home by the child/parent. Do not wash/sluice or soak the contaminated items on behalf of the child/parent • Vacuum cleaning carpets and floor buffing are not recommended during an outbreak • At the end of an outbreak, need to compete a terminal clean including steam cleaning of soft furnishings and carpets
Public spillage incident	• When spillages of vomit or diarrhoea occur: • Cover the excreta/vomit spillages immediately with disposable paper towels. • Always wear a disposable apron and gloves when disposing of faeces/vomit. A face mask should be worn if there is a concern about splash contamination to the face. • After removing the spillage, clean the surrounding area with warm soapy water, followed by disinfection with a hypochlorite solution of 1000 parts per million. Always clean a wider area than is visibly contaminated, including surrounding surfaces that may have been affected by splashes or droplets. • Carpets contaminated with faeces or vomit should be cleaned with warm soapy water (or a carpet shampoo) after removal of the spillage with paper towels. This should be followed by steam cleaning if possible • The area where the incident has occurred should be cleared and ventilated as soon as possible • Dispose of gloves, apron, and cloths into the clinical waste bag, if available, or double bag in a domestic waste bag then dispose of in a main waste bin.
Food safety	• Everyone should eat and drink in designated areas (i.e. dining hall or staff room) • Open packages of food i.e. boxes of chocolates/biscuits and fruit bowls must be removed in an outbreak as they can easily become contaminated • Kitchen staff should avoid contact with children at the setting during an outbreak, in order to avoid contamination of the kitchen or food • Kitchens MUST have their own separate cleaning equipment. • Use colour-coded cleaning equipment for different areas to help prevent cross-contamination.
Activities	• Cookery activities for the children as well as sand, playdough and water play activities should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak. All potentially contaminated materials should be discarded and replaced in accordance with your local procedure
Communications	Send factsheet sheet to parents and staff and display handwashing posters.

Reporting to UKHSA / HPT	
When to contact UKHSA - West Midlands Health Protection Team (WMHPT) **(If you have local arrangements please use them, if not your WMHPT can advise)**	Please contact West Midlands Heath Protection Team 0344 225 3560 option 2, Monday –Friday 9am –5pm or email westmidlands.arc@ukhsa.gov.uk if: • there are a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of absences due to diarrhoea and vomiting • cases of vomiting and diarrhoea are associated with a setting trip or event • any children/staff have had illness severe enough to require in hospitalisation • reports of bloody diarrhoea • increased levels of concern in parents/ public/ media The general increase in diarrhoea and vomiting cases which occur periodically (which are usually caused by norovirus) can be managed by the setting using this guidance.
What WMHPT will ask for	• Name and address of the setting, including the postcode • Contact person's name and phone number • Total number of children at the setting • Details of the year groups / classes • Number of staff • Number of children affected, which year groups, details of siblings affected • Number of staff affected • Date of onset of first illness (onset date) • Details of any recent trips, special events • Details of any episodes of public vomiting • Details of kitchen staff affected • Setting layout and facilities, particularly who shares toilets