

OUTBREAK CHECKLIST TOOL  
RESPIRATORY / GASTROENTERITIS



Grey Bruce Health Unit 519-376-9420 Ext: 6 Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

OUTBREAK NUMBER: 2233 – 20 \_\_ \_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Date declared: \_\_\_\_\_

Type:  Respiratory  Gastroenteritis Status:  Suspect  Confirmed

Agent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date identified: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting to Public Health

Contact Grey Bruce Health Unit when any of the following is identified:

Respiratory/Influenza – Suspect or Confirmed Infection Outbreak Definitions:

**Suspect respiratory infection outbreak definitions:**

- Two cases of acute respiratory tract illness (ARI) occurring within 48 hours with any common epidemiological link (e.g., unit, floor); **OR**
- One laboratory confirmed case of influenza

**Confirmed respiratory infection outbreak definitions:**

- Two cases of acute respiratory tract illness (ARI) within 48 hours with any common epidemiological link (e.g., unit, floor), at least one of which must be lab confirmed; **OR**
- Three cases of acute respiratory illness (laboratory confirmation not necessary) occurring within 48 hours with any common epidemiological link (e.g., unit, floor)

COVID-19 – Suspect or Confirmed Outbreak Definitions:

**Suspect COVID-19 outbreak definition:**

- One positive molecular test in a resident, where source of acquisition is thought to be from within the home (including a potential epi link to a staff or visitor case) or cannot be determined

**Confirmed COVID-19 outbreak definition:**

- Two or more residents with a common epi link (e.g.2, same unit, floor, etc.), each with a positive molecular or rapid antigen test, within a 10-day period

Gastroenteritis – Suspect or Confirmed Infection Outbreak Definitions:

To be defined as a case of infectious gastroenteritis, **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
- Laboratory confirmation** of a known gastrointestinal pathogen and at least one symptom compatible with gastrointestinal infection

**Note:** Symptoms must not be attributed to another cause (e.g. medication side effects, laxatives, diet or prior medical condition)

**Suspected gastroenteritis outbreak definition:**

- If an outbreak is suspected, notify the Health Unit to support with the investigation and management.

**Confirmed gastroenteritis outbreak definitions:**

- 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.

**Note:** Outbreaks can exist outside the outbreak definition parameters. The Health Unit is available for consultation if you are experiencing increased illness above your normal thresholds.

- Fax Initial Line listing of Residents and Staff to 519-376-4152
- Obtain case definition from Health Unit
- Obtain Outbreak Number from Health Unit

Control Measures for Staff

- Reinforce Routine Practices e.g. Hand hygiene, PPE, point of care risk assessment
  - Ensure alcohol based hand sanitizer of at least 70% alcohol is available
  - Cohort staff to affected areas and to ill resident cases if possible
  - Exclude symptomatic staff
  - Conduct audits  Hand hygiene  PPE  Environmental Cleaning
  - Implement additional precautions as needed – CONTACT/DROPLET
  - Working at other facilities: Refer to the MOHLTC Outbreak Guides and the facility policy and procedures
  - Ensure that Outbreak Control Measures are posted for staff to view
- [Link to Control Measures for Respiratory/Influenza/Gastroenteritis Outbreaks](#)

### Control Measures for Residents

- Contact Grey Bruce Health Unit to discuss admissions and transfers
- Promote frequent hand washing for residents
- Ensure alcohol based hand sanitizer of at least 70% alcohol is available
- Select the appropriate additional precautions for the outbreak:
  - Contact: gloves & gown
  - Droplet: eye protection & mask (medical/surgical or N95)
- Isolate symptomatic residents in their room:
  - Respiratory Outbreaks: until five days after the onset of symptoms or when symptoms resolve (whichever is shortest)
  - COVID-19 Outbreaks: until 10 days **after** the onset of symptoms or date of positive specimen collect (whichever is earlier/applicable) and until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and no fever present
  - Gastroenteritis Outbreaks: until 48 hours after symptoms have resolved
- Cancel/postpone events and activities
- Discuss unit specific activities with Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Consult treating physician, about rescheduling non-urgent appointments; with consent of the resident / substitute decision maker

### Specimen Collection

- Label the specimen, at a minimum with the following:  resident's name and date of birth  date of collection
- Complete **all fields** on the lab requisition, ensure that the same two patient identifiers are on the lab requisition and specimen container
- Use coloured paper requisition, if available
- Ensure the outbreak number is on the lab requisition
- Refrigerate the specimens until they are ready to be transported
- Send specimens to Public Health Ontario Lab

### Surveillance

- Advise staff to watch for symptoms/new cases
- Advise residents to report symptoms to staff
- Conduct daily surveillance of residents and staff
- Update internal line lists with suspect and confirmed cases
- Add residents and/or staff that meet the case definition to the public health line list
- Use a separate line list for each unit/ward/floor to report residents cases to Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Put all staff cases on a separate line list for each unit/ward/floor
- Update line list daily and fax to Grey Bruce Health Unit by noon each day: 519-376-4152

### Communication

- Post outbreak signage at all entrances and all affected areas
- Communicate outbreak status and control measures to appropriate stakeholders
- Notify Physician(s)
- Notify resident's family/caregivers
- Provide necessary education (staff, residents, visitors)
- Ensure additional precautions are easily identified by staff
- Conduct daily outbreak management team meetings

### Visitors

**Respiratory/Gastroenteritis**

- General visitors are permitted: Visitors should visit only one resident, visit is recommended in their room and not in common areas. If a visitor is visiting two residents they should visit the well resident first.
- Visitors should be reminded of hand hygiene practices and other IPAC measures the home is following

**COVID 19**

- General visitors are not permitted
- Essential care providers are permitted
- Visitors for the purposes of compassionate, or palliative/end-of-life visits are permitted
- Visitors should be reminded of hand hygiene practices and other IPAC measures as required

**Environmental Cleaning**

- Enhance environmental cleaning of high touch surfaces and equipment
- Ensure disinfectant being used is appropriate and effective on the identified organism and contact time is being met as per supplier directions
- Dedicate equipment to specific resident, or clean and disinfect shared equipment between every use
- Complete terminal cleaning of resident rooms once additional precautions have been discontinued

**Influenza Outbreak - Antivirals**Residents:

- Implement antiviral prophylaxis and treatment as per medical directives, orders, and MOHLTC guidelines

Staff:

- Advise unimmunized staff to take antivirals as per medical directive
- Implement staff exclusion policy for unimmunized staff unwilling or unable to take antivirals

**COVID-19 - Antivirals**Residents:

- Residents/clients can be assessed by their primary care provider or other health care providers for the use of COVID-19 antivirals for treatment
- Implement COVID-19 antivirals for eligible residents as per medical directives, health care provider orders, and MOHLTC guidelines

**Declaring Outbreak Over**

- To declare an outbreak over, consult with Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Notify internal and external stakeholders once outbreak declared over
- Conduct debrief meeting with outbreak management team

For more information please visit us at: <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Infectious-Diseases/Professional-Resources/Outbreak-Management>

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Guidelines to managing outbreaks:**

**Respiratory:** [Control of Respiratory Infection Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, 2018, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, November 2018](#)

**Gastroenteritis:** [Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis in Long-Term Care Homes, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, March 2018](#)

**COVID-19 for LTC/RH:** [COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units, June 2022](#)

**COVID-19 for Congregate Care:** [COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations, June 2022](#)