



Health Care Facility Outbreaks Information for families and visitors

What is an outbreak?

Outbreaks occur when more than the usual number of people that are in a health care facility are experiencing similar symptoms associated with an illness.

There are two common types of outbreaks within health care facilities, and they are:

- Respiratory
- Enteric

What happens during an outbreak?

When there is an outbreak within a health care facility, the facility is required to contact Public Health so they can work together to ensure certain infection prevention and control measures are put into place to help reduce the spread of illness. Some of these would include:

- Keeping ill residents in their rooms
- Stopping group activities in the affected area during the outbreak
- Increasing housekeeping hours
- Visiting restrictions

The health care facilities need your assistance and understanding, as you will be asked to:

- Visit only your family member
- Clean your hands before entering and exiting the facility AND before and after visiting with your family member
- If you are providing direct care, please wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gown, mask, before entering the room

Other measures you can take to prevent illness in a health care facility

- Stay home if you are not feeling well
- Get your flu shot every year. If you are protected against the flu you can't pass it on to others, especially your family member
- Limit the foods that you bring to the health care facility for your family member to eat, as food can spoil at the bedside and cause illness

You are an important part of keeping everyone well

Outbreaks can be disruptive to the lives of those impacted within a health care facility, the staff and visitors.

The infection prevention and control measures are put into place to reduce the spread of illness, especially among individuals who are more likely to become ill. With a reduction in the spread of illness, the outbreak will be over faster.

Let's all work together to keep everyone healthy!

If you have more questions about outbreaks in health care facility please speak to nursing staff.

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Adapted with permission of Niagara Region Public Health