

Appendix B: Provincial Case Definitions for Reportable Diseases

Disease: Gastroenteritis, Institutional Outbreaks

Revised August 2015

Gastroenteritis, Institutional Outbreaks

1.0 Provincial Reporting

Confirmed outbreaks

2.0 Type of Surveillance

Outbreak summary data

3.0 Outbreak Classification

3.1 Confirmed Outbreak Definition

- **Three or more cases** with signs and symptoms compatible with infectious gastroenteritis in a specific unit or floor within a four-day period;

OR

- Three or more units/floors having a case of infectious gastroenteritis within 48 hours.

See section 7.0 (Comments) for further details.

3.2 Suspected Outbreak Definition

- **Two suspected cases** of infectious gastroenteritis in a specific area, such as a home, unit, or floor within 48 hours.

See section 7.0 (Comments) for further details.

4.0 Laboratory Evidence

4.1 Laboratory Confirmation

- Confirmation of an outbreak of gastroenteritis is not dependent on laboratory confirmation.

4.2 Approved/Validated Tests

- Given the variability of aetiological organisms, consult with laboratory about appropriate testing methodologies.

4.3 Indications and Limitations

- N/A

5.0 Clinical Evidence

Clinically compatible signs and symptoms depend upon aetiological agent and may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or tenderness.

6.0 ICD Code(s)

ICD 10 Code A09A

7.0 Comments

To be defined as a case of infectious gastroenteritis for outbreak detection, **at least one** of the following must be met:

- Two or more episodes of loose/watery bowel movements that conforms to the shape of the container and cannot be attributed to another cause (e.g., laxative use, known medication side effects, diet or prior medical conditions) within a 24-hour period, or **two or more** episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period;

OR

- One episode of loose/watery bowel movements (conforms to the shape of the container) and one episode of vomiting within a 24-hour period;

OR

- Laboratory confirmation of a known gastrointestinal pathogen **and** at least one symptom compatible with gastrointestinal infection – nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or tenderness.

To be defined as a suspected case within a suspected gastroenteritis outbreak, only one episode of either vomiting or diarrhea and with or without other signs and symptoms associated with gastrointestinal illness.

A suspected case becomes a case when at least one of the criteria under the definition of a case within a gastroenteritis outbreak is met.

Note:

All gastroenteritis outbreaks in institutions are reportable regardless of whether they are caused by:

- A reportable agent;*
- A non-reportable agent; or
- An unknown cause.

A gastroenteritis institutional outbreak should be declared by the medical officer of health or designate in consultation with the outbreak management team of the institution.

The outbreak case definition for diarrheal illness in this Appendix and in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care guidance document *Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, 2013* is purposefully sensitive to facilitate the early detection and management of potential outbreaks of gastroenteritis in institutions. The definition requires only two or more episodes of diarrhea to meet the case definition rather than three or more episodes of diarrhea found in other surveillance documents, including the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC)'s *Best practices for surveillance of health care-associated infections in patients and resident populations, 2014*.

*Once a reportable agent (e.g., Salmonella, E. coli) is confirmed, cases should then be reported under their respective disease.

8.0 Sources

Heymann DL, editor. Control of communicable diseases manual. 19th ed. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association; 2008.

Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in long-term care homes [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013 [cited 2014 Dec 9]. Available from:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/guidance/gd_control_gastroenteritis_outbreaks.pdf

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for surveillance of health care-associated infections in patient and resident populations. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014.

9.0 Document History

Table 1: History of Revisions

Revision Date	Document Section	Description of Revisions
April 2015	General	New template. Section 9.0 Document History added.
April 2015	1.0 Provincial Reporting	Added: “(non <i>Clostridium difficile</i> Infection (CDI) related outbreaks)”.
April 2015	3.2 Suspected Outbreak Definition	Entire section added.
April 2015	7.0 Comments	Entire section revised.
April 2015	8.0 Sources	Title of section revised from “References”. Sources updated.
August 2015	1.0 Provincial Reporting	Removal of “(non <i>Clostridium difficile</i> Infection (CDI) related outbreaks)”.

