Gastroenteritis Illness Checklist for Child Care Centres

*The following items should be in place when there is an increase in gastroenteritis illness in the child care centre (3 or more ill children in a 4 day time period). Once 5 days have passed from the last child’s onset date, enhanced control measures can be discontinued.*

**Surveillance**

* Add ill children to the surveillance line listing that meet the case definition (see below) in order to track when the illness started, ended, and when the child can return to the centre
* Only fax the line listing when requested by Public Health

Case definition for gastroenteritis:

Place a child on the line list if they have had:

* + Two or more episodes of diarrhea or watery stool within a 24 hour period, or two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24 hour period, **OR**
  + One episode of diarrhea or watery stool and one episode of vomiting within a 24 hour period

**Exclusion**

* Exclude ill children that meet the case definition (above) from the child care centre until at least **48 hours symptom free**
* Have a supervised, dedicated space for an ill child until a parent/guardian can pick the child up

**Hand Hygiene**

* Increase hand hygiene among children especially
  + After toileting/diapering
  + After playing outside
  + Before and after eating or drinking
* Ensure each hand washing sink at the child care centre is supplied with liquid soap, paper towels, and warm running water
* Have children use liquid soap and water when hands are dirty, after toileting/diapering, and after playing outside
* Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) may be used when hands are not visibly dirty and when supervised by staff. Check the expiration date for ABHR. Remove and replace expired ABHR.
* Remove non-alcohol based hand rub products. Make sure the ABHR has at least 70% alcohol content.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

* PPE kept on hand should include disposable single use gloves and masks
* Wear single use non-latex gloves and a mask (surgical only, not N95) when cleaning up body fluids such as vomit and diarrhea from surfaces and toys.
* Have PPE placed throughout the child care centre so that staff have immediate access to the required supplies

**Communication**

* Update staff and parents regarding the status of illness in the child care centre (e.g., verbal, electronic, posting)
* Recommend parents have their ill child assessed by a physician if the child has a fever greater than 39°C or if symptoms persist. The physician will determine whether to collect a stool sample
* Advise any visitors (e.g., parents, housekeeping, other support services such as speech language pathologist) of the increased illness in the child care centre. Encourage visitors to visit only one room/child and to perform hand hygiene before entering and after leaving

**Cleaning and Disinfection (Surfaces and Toys)**

* Increase cleaning and disinfection using a product that is effective against norovirus (i.e. accelerated hydrogen peroxide). This will be stated on the label or can be found online. Pay particular attention to routinely touched surfaces (washrooms and common areas, including toys). Routinely touched surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day while there is an increase in illness in the centre.
* Routinely touched surfaces must be cleaned before they are disinfected unless a one-step product is used.
* If accelerated hydrogen peroxide is used, remember:
  + Pre-cleaning may be required
  + Follow the label for product use, dilution and handling
  + Follow the disinfection contact time or the time the product must stay wet on the surface (e.g., 5 minutes)
  + Rinse this product off of food contact surfaces (i.e. tables, countertops) as this is not a food grade product
  + If a bleach and water disinfectant is used, remember:
* Clean the surface or toy with soap and water first, rinse, and then apply the bleach and water solution. Allow to air dry.
* Bleach and water requires a 10 minute contact time
* Make a new bleach and water solution daily
* Mix 1 part bleach with 10 parts water (1/2 cup bleach to 4 ½ cups of water, or 125 ml bleach to 1 litre of water) when disinfecting body fluid spills
* Do not spray the cleaning and disinfection product on surfaces or toys. Either apply using a wipe/cloth or immerse the item following manufacturer’s instructions
* Review the label of the cleaning and disinfection product used onsite and follow instructions especially for:
  + Whether pre-cleaning is required before cleaning and disinfection
  + Whether PPE is required when using the product
  + How to apply the product
  + Contact time for disinfection (time the product must remain wet on the item)
  + Whether a rinse step is required
  + Expiration date. Do not used expired products
  + Storage (store out of children’s reach)

**Toys and Educational Materials**

* Remove toys and items from the classroom that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., cardboard, unsealed wood/wicker) during the increase in illness and for at least 2 weeks after the increase is over
* Discontinue water table and sensory use for group activities
  + Discard water and clean and disinfect the water table
  + Close the sensory bin during the increase in illness and for at least 2 weeks after the increase is over

**Body Fluid Spill Clean Up**

* Clean and disinfect the contaminated area as soon as possible
* Staff should wear PPE and use paper towels to immediately cover and contain the spill
* Place any soiled clothing into a disposable plastic bag for parent pick up. Handle as little as possible
* Clean the area with soap and water first, then disinfect the area following the product label and manufacturer’s instructions
* Place all garbage directly into a leak-proof bag
* Remove and discard your PPE (gloves and mask), then wash your hands using liquid soap, warm running water, and paper towels
* Launder any contaminated linens in a separate load. Do not mix contaminated linens with regular linens

**Other**

* Limit self-serve snacks/family style dining and suspend special events when there is an increase in illness
* Have a policy and procedure for child care staff to follow when there is an increase in gastroenteritis illness at the child care centre.

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