Gastroenteritis Enhanced Infection Control Practices for Child Care Centres

*The following items should be in place when there is an increase in gastroenteritis illness in the childcare centre (3 or more ill children in a 4-day 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) to track when the illness started, ended, and when the child can return to the centre
* Only email the line listing when requested by Public Health to [congregatesetting@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:congregatesetting@wdgpublichealth.ca)

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 childcare 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 washing among children especially
  + After toileting/diapering
  + After playing outside
  + Before and after eating or drinking
* Ensure each hand washing sink at the childcare 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.
* Encourage everyone to perform hand hygiene before entering and after leaving childcare centre.

**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 childcare centre so that staff have immediate access to the required supplies

**Communication**

* Update staff and parents regarding the status of illness in the childcare 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 childcare 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 effective against norovirus (i.e., a surface disinfectant with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) issued by Health Canada) that specifically claims to be effective against norovirus. This information will be stated on the label or can be found online. Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces, such as bathroom counters, toilets, doorknobs, taps, light switches, and toys. These surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day during periods of increased illness in the center.
* Routinely touched surfaces must be cleaned before they are disinfected unless a one-step product is used.
* Do not spray the cleaning and disinfection product on surfaces or toys. Either apply using a wipe/cloth or immerse the item.
* 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
  + If the product is appropriate for food contact surfaces. Be sure to double-check the instructions to confirm it is appropriate for use.
  + 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 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

**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 childcare staff to follow when there is an increase in gastroenteritis illness at the childcare centre.