Dear Parents or Guardians:

Your childcare centre is currently experiencing an increase of gastrointestinal illness. Symptoms of gastrointestinal illness often begin suddenly and may include diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, headache, fever, chills, and tiredness. To prevent the spread of illness, we ask that any child showing symptoms, particularly vomiting or diarrhea, remain at home until they are symptom-free for at least 48 hours.

Common enteric illnesses in childcare centres include norovirus and rotavirus. These viruses can be spread from person to person through contaminated hands and surfaces or through food or shared items such as toys. Even if hands or surfaces appear clean, they can still carry and spread the virus. These viruses can survive on surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, and toys for long periods of time.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

* Keep your child home until they are symptom free for at least 48 hours
* Ensure anyone who is ill to drink lots of clear fluids to prevent dehydration.
* Wash you and your children’s hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the washroom, changing a diaper, before eating and handling food.
* Hand sanitizer can be a useful addition to handwashing, but washing hands with soap and water is most effective.
* Routinely Clean and disinfect surfaces, washrooms, toys, and shared objects in your home especially if anyone in your household is ill.
* Regular household cleaners, vinegar or essential oils will *not* kill norovirus. Look for products that list their ability to be effective against Norovirus. You can find this information on the product label or online.
* If your child has a fever greater than 39ºC or if symptoms persist, contact a healthcare provider. Your doctor may order a stool sample.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to keep our childcare center safe and healthy for all children.

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