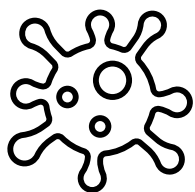


GASTROENTERITIS

Information for children's services facilities

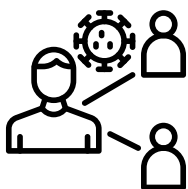


What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (more commonly known as gastro) is a short-term illness triggered by infection that causes inflammation of the digestive system.

Symptoms can include:

- Diarrhoea (watery poo)
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach cramps and abdominal pain
- Sometimes - muscle aches, headaches and low-grade fever



How do you know it is a gastro outbreak?

An outbreak may be defined as two or more cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea among children and/or staff within 48 hours of each other.

If this occurs and the symptoms cannot be explained by medication or other medical conditions, you may have an outbreak.



How can you prevent an outbreak?

The aim is to prevent further cases by identifying the source, and minimising spread by keeping ill cases away. It is also important to implement infection control practices effective against the organisms that cause gastro.

One of the most common causes of gastro outbreaks in children's services is norovirus. Norovirus is a very hardy organism that can survive on surfaces for up to 28 days and is highly infectious. Cleaning and disinfecting are some of the most important measures for limiting the spread of disease.



Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is also important in preventing the spread of gastro. Staff, children and visitors must have access to hand washing facilities and be aware of proper hand hygiene techniques.

Outbreaks of gastroenteritis should be reported to the LMPHU by calling 1800 959 400.

Further information on managing gastro outbreaks is available:

- [Management of gastro outbreaks](#)
- [Advice on environmental cleaning](#)
- [Chlorine dilution quick guide](#)
- By contacting an Environmental Health Officer at your local council