

Norovirus Investigations in Long Term Care Facilities Things to Consider

What constitutes an outbreak at a LTC?

- Different than other definitions due to condition of residents
- The presence of more diarrhea or vomiting than would usually be seen at the facility/unit for that time of year

Types of outbreaks

- Point source – common exposure (meal prepared by ill food worker), many cases in same incubation period
- Person to person – gradual spread, many cycles of the incubation period (introduced by visitor)
- Combination – begins as point source, continues as p-to-p

Prevention and Control

- Do not delay prevention and control measures while waiting for confirmation
- Begin disinfecting with bleach
 - Increase housekeeping frequency
 - QUATs are ineffective
 - EPA is currently looking at products
- Handwashing emphasized for EVERYONE in the facility
 - Alcohol rubs are ineffective, can be used in addition to hand washing, but not as the primary method

Residents

- Cohort ill residents
- Place ill under contact precautions
- Restricted to their rooms as much as possible for at least 48 hours after symptoms end
- Cancel group activities

Staff

- Send ill staff home immediately
- Staff remain out for at least 48 hours after symptoms end
- Staff should not work at other facilities or “float” between facilities during this time
- When return to work, staff should work with ill residents



Norovirus Investigations in Long Term Care Facilities

Things to Consider continued....

Visitors

- Encourage all visitors and volunteers to wash their hands
- Visits from immuno-compromised people should be postponed
- Distribute educational information (fact sheets) – monitor for illness

Communicate with ICP or DON

- Request line listing with the following information
 - # ill residents
 - # ill staff
 - illness onset dates (times if possible)
 - symptoms
 - duration of illness (average)
 - distribution of illness (wing/unit)
 - hospitalizations or deaths associated with outbreak

If no testing performed... norovirus likely when

- Stools negative for bacterial pathogens
- Mean or median incubation period 24-48 hours
- Vomiting in at least 50%
- Mean or median duration of illness 12-60 hours