

GASTROENTERITIS, VIRAL (Outbreaks only)

(Both epidemic and sporadic viral gastroenteritis.)

1. **Agent:** Viral gastroenteritis may be caused by various viruses such as Noroviruses (formerly named Norwalk-like viruses)—a family of serologically related viruses; rotaviruses; astroviruses; enteric adenoviruses; other viruses. Viral gastroenteritis outbreaks are most commonly caused by Norovirus.

2. Identification:

a. **Symptoms:** The most common symptoms are:

Norovirus: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, headache, and low-grade fever lasting about 24-48 hours. Present in children and adults.

Rotavirus Group A: Watery diarrhea, fever and vomiting in infants and young children, which often leads to significant dehydration.

b. **Differential Diagnosis:** See MMWR Guidelines for Confirmation of Foodborne-Disease Outbreaks.*

3. Incubation:

Norovirus: Usually 24-48 hours; may be 10-50 hours

Rotavirus: 24-72 hours.

4. Reservoir:

a. **Noroviruses:** Man.

b. **Rotavirus:** Probably man.

c. **Other viruses:** Probably man.

5. Source:

None.

6. Transmission:

Norovirus: Fecal-oral and contact with possible airborne spread. Also, foodborne, waterborne and shellfish transmission.

Rotavirus: Fecal-oral with possible contact or respiratory spread.

7. **Communicability:** During the acute stage of disease while virus shedding continues. May continue for days after recovery.

8. **Specific Treatment:** None. For dehydrated patients, implement supportive treatment with correction of fluid and electrolyte deficits.

9. Immunity:

a. **Norovirus:** Short-term immunity lasting up to 14 weeks.

b. **Rotavirus Group A:** By 2 years of age most individuals are immune. A vaccine for infants was approved in 2006.

c. **Other viruses:** Short-term immunity may occur.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Individual cases not reportable. Outbreaks reportable immediately by phone, *California Code of Regulations*, Section 2502.

Epidemiologic data:

a. Other cases among persons attending a common gathering, or in hospital or clinics. Secondary cases.

b. Possible food and water (potable, recreational) sources.

* CDC. Guidelines for confirmation of foodborne-disease outbreaks. MMWR 2000; 49(SS01):54-62. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4901a3.htm.

CONTROL OF CASE, CONTACTS & CARRIERS

CASE:

Precautions: Enteric precautions. Food handlers and other sensitive occupations should be removed from work until 72 hours after symptoms end.

CONTACTS: Search for other cases among household members. Symptomatic food handlers should be managed as a case.

PREVENTION-EDUCATION

1. Implement hygienic measures applicable to diseases transmitted via fecal-oral route, or contaminated fomites route.
2. Prevent exposure of infants and young children to individuals with acute gastroenteritis.

DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES

San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory services are available. Refer to the Laboratory Services Manual in Section 2, Disease Reporting.