

Following our recent outbreak of the sickness bug, please find advice from NHS Lothian

Norovirus Infection Control Advice for Schools and Nurseries

Vital infection control measures for the initial management of an outbreak include:-

- 1. Thorough hand washing is the simplest and most important infection control measure.** Please advise that all children and staff wash their hands frequently using warm water and soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating and preparing food. Alcohol hand gels/rubs are not effective against norovirus. Liquid soap via a soap dispenser should be made available and there should be a plentiful supply of paper towels. Younger nursery pupils may require supervision.
- 2. Environmental cleaning:** Robust environmental cleaning immediately after any contamination by diarrhoea or vomit is vital to contain the spread of the virus. The frequency of toilet cleaning and frequently touched surfaces (e.g. flush and door handles) should be increased, e.g. clean after each break time and after a child has been sick or had diarrhoea.
- 3. Prompt exclusion** of affected children and staff until they have been symptom free for 48 hours. Affected children should be isolated from their class mates until collected by their parents/carer.
- 4. Personal protective equipment:** Disposable aprons and gloves should be worn when cleaning the environment, cleaning and disinfecting potties, changing nappies, toileting a child or cleaning up vomit or diarrhoea. Staff should wash their hands after the removal of gloves or aprons.
- 5. Staff and pupil movements** between classrooms and joint class activities in school, e.g. assembly should be restricted.
- 6. Cancellation of trips and events.** The advice for schools and nurseries with an outbreak of norovirus is to cancel any trips outwith the school, and to keep the number of visitors to the school to a minimum. Unfortunately in the past this has meant cancelling major school events.
- 7. Deep cleaning of school premises** needs to be timely and effective. If cleaning is delayed it can lead to increased risk of disease transmission and unnecessary school closure. Environmental cleaning with bleach diluted to 1:1000 is recommended as the most effective way to destroy the virus. It may be beneficial to devise your own deep clean procedure, identifying the appropriate personnel, contractors and other resources necessary to do this. The HPT can advise on appropriate deep cleaning procedures.
- 8. You should make sure that your cleaning personnel** have procedures in place and the materials and equipment required to carry out cleaning during and after an incident of environmental contamination with vomit or diarrhoea.

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