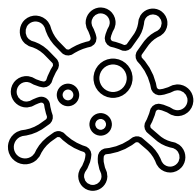


# Gastroenteritis

## Information for aged and residential care facilities

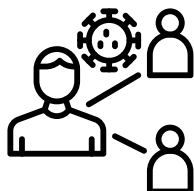


### What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (gastro) is a short-term illness triggered by infection and causes inflammation of the digestive system.

Symptoms of gastro 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 is two or more cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea among residents/patients and/or staff (that cannot be explained by medication or other medical conditions) within 72 hours.

It is important to note that this definition may not always cover all outbreaks.



### How can you prevent an outbreak?

The aim is to prevent further cases by finding the source, and minimising spread by isolating cases. It is also important to put infection control practices that work against the organisms that cause gastro in place.

One of the most common causes of gastro outbreaks in residential care facilities 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 for preventing the spread of gastro. Staff, residents 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