

GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS FAQ

What is Gastrointestinal Illness?

Gastrointestinal illness (GI) is generally caused by viruses and bacteria, and occasionally from the toxins created by bacteria.

How do people get Gastrointestinal Illness?

Gastrointestinal illnesses are spread from person to person through stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected by eating contaminated food or touching contaminated surfaces and then placing their hands in their mouth. These micro organisms can live on surfaces (such as countertops, doorknobs and toilet seats), so can easily be spread when a person touches something contaminated. Remember to wash your hands frequently!

What are the symptoms of Gastrointestinal Illness?

Gastrointestinal illness can cause a variety of symptoms including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, muscle aches, headache, weakness, low grade fever or a combination of these symptoms.

How does a GI Outbreak impact your ill family member?

- Signs will be posted at the entrance of the building or unit identifying an Outbreak.
- Activities and outings may be cancelled.
- Gowns, gloves & masks may be worn by staff when caring for your family member.
- To prevent the illness from spreading, your family member may:
 - be encouraged to stay in their room, receive their meals in their room or be asked to sit at a separate table
 - be transferred to the hospital if they require additional treatment
 - need to reschedule non-urgent medical appointments
- Residents who are NOT ill may attend other facilities for medically necessary

If you have any questions that were not answered here, please ask a nurse on your ward, or ask to speak with a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.



Always clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub, particularly after going to the toilet and before eating food.



For more info, visit:

www.interiorhealth.ca