7 residents have been having diarrhea and vomiting since yesterday!!
OUTBREAK

- Defined as an increase over the expected occurrences of an event.
- A small rise in an occurrence may be called a cluster.
- Thus surveillance must be in place to know what is the “norm”
CAUSES

- Food borne illness
- Introduction and transmission of an infectious disease within the site
- Lapse in Infection Prevention and Control Measures (Routine Practices)
- Contaminated or defective products or devices
- A reservoir for a pathogen in the healthcare site
Determine if there is an outbreak
Implement immediate control measures
Confirm the existence of an outbreak/establish a case definition
Assemble an outbreak team/committee
Ongoing monitoring/communication
Declaring the outbreak over
Debriefing the staff
Writing the report and recommendations
Determine if there is an outbreak

- Who can you get reliable information from?
- Are there alternate causes?
- What is normal for your facility?
- Are there parameters that signify an outbreak of this type?

- **GI illness**
  - 2 or more episodes of diarrhea in a 24hr period above what is considered normal for that person
  - 2 or more episodes of vomiting in a 24hr period or
  - Positive culture of a known enteric pathogen with a symptom of GI infection OR
  - 1 episode of bloody diarrhea (BC)

- **GI Outbreak**
  - 3 or more cases of GI infection (as above), potentially related, occurring within a 4 day period within a geographical area (unit/ward)
Who is ill?
What symptoms do they have?
Where are the cases located?
When did the symptoms start?
Why?

Taking a few moments to find out the information and complete your LINE LIST is invaluable in developing a good surveillance report.

Check with ALL units and pull together any information on staff who are off due to illness.
IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATE CONTROL MEASURES

- Routine Practices/Additional Precautions
- Initially based on symptoms
- Separate from healthy patients/residents
- Communication with patients/residents and families
Collect Samples

- Make sure samples are being collected as appropriate depending on symptoms
- Sent for the correct tests
- Labeled correctly and specify outbreak
- Communicate with the lab that there is an outbreak and what specimens to expect
CONFIRM EXISTENCE OF AN OUTBREAK/ESTABLISH A CASE DEFINITION

- Notify your public health officer (MOH or CPHO)
- Use epidemiologist if available
- Develop case definition
  - What collection of symptoms constitutes a case and how many cases constitute an outbreak
- lab results
ASSEMBLE AN OUTBREAK TEAM

- Have a preassembled outbreak team for your facility
- Adjust as required for departments involved, such as nursing unit involved.
- Decisions made from this team.......the outbreak does not lie entirely on the shoulders of the ICP or designate!
DUTIES OF OUTBREAK TEAM

- How to communicate? Phone, in person, email updates?
- Hard decisions - signage to be used, closing unit/facility, who should be notified, media representative
- Tasks assigned
- Communication within facility and to other facilities
- Sick staff management - calling in extra staff
ONGOING MONITORING/COMMUNICATION

- Prevention
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Is there anything else to do?
- Further communication with feeder facilities, outpatient clinics or any other areas where patients/residents might normally go
Determine who can do this?
Consider incubation period, length of illness
Communication
- Within facility
- External
- Media
- Public health officer
DEBRIEFING THE STAFF

- Who is responsible to do?
- Who is involved in the debrief?
- What went well
- What to do better next time
- About improving performance and making recommendations to enhance performance
Outbreak Summary Report (example)

Date of onset of outbreak: ________  Date outbreak declared over: _________

Microorganism identified: ____________  Laboratory Confirmed? Yes___ No___

Number of specimens identified in: ______  Suspected source: _____________

Number of patients exposed: ________  Total number of cases (patients): ____

Attach rate for patients (# of exposed divided by # of cases, multiply by 100):____

Number of HCPs exposed: _______  Total number of cases (HCPs): ______

Attach rate for HCPs (# of exposed divided by # of cases, multiply by 100): ______

Number of cases requiring higher level of care: ________
(E.g. transfer to hospital, transfer to ICU)

Number of deaths: ________

Unusual situations:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
GOAL OF THE REPORT

- Summarize facts of the outbreak
- Substantiate recommendations
- Share new insights
- Prevent future outbreaks
- Assist in investigation and control of similar incidents
- Provide a document for potential legal issues
Use information from the outbreak report and debrief session to develop long term control and prevention measures for outbreaks.

- they might be simple - pre-packaged specimen collection kits for each unit (including requisitions) OR
- more complicated - develop an internal and external communications plan