

## 2. Managing illness and outbreaks

### If people are sick at your site:

1. Notify your site supervisor.
2. If you have a higher than normal number of people having symptoms, check the table below to determine if you should reach out to your Communicable Disease Public Health Contacts to report the illnesses.

### Be prepared to provide your Public Health Contact with key information:

- The symptoms reported by people who are sick
- How many people are sick
- When the illnesses started
- If there are any possible explanations for the symptoms of any clients

Once illness has been identified at your site, the TPH Illness Monitoring Log is available for use.

### Type of Illness

### When to Call Public Health

#### Respiratory Illness



- **When the situation is not improving** (after taking the measures outlined in the Respiratory Illness section)
- **When people are severely sick**, and have declined care or many have been hospitalized.

#### Gastrointestinal Illness



#### 3 or more staff and/or clients with NEW onset of the following symptoms:

- 3 or more episodes of diarrhea and/or vomiting within 4 days
- Any episode of bloody diarrhea

#### Other Unusual Illness



#### Sites may call Public Health regarding diseases that may benefit from further advice and/or investigation, including:

- Group A Streptococcus
- Red Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Meningitis
- Mpox (previously called monkeypox)
- Hepatitis
- Any other illnesses of concern
- An unusual number of clients with rash illness within a 10-day period

## 2.1 Prepare Staff and the Site

There are many steps you can take to prepare for illness and outbreaks at your site.

### Communicable Disease Prevention and Outbreak Plan:

- ☐ **1. Read** and be informed about outbreak prevention and planning. See Staff Education Resources in this handbook.

- ☐ **2. Assign** staff member(s) (site manager/supervisor) at your site to be your Outbreak Prevention and Management Lead.

Lead Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **3. Keep a list** of contacts in healthcare and Public Health. Use “Key Health Contacts” template in this handbook.

Find the list here: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **4. Use posters** with communicable disease information if illness is circulating at your site (e.g. extra measures at this site, how to clean hands, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), disease-specific posters).

Find posters here: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **5. Have PPE** (personal protective equipment like masks, gowns, gloves) available for staff and clients.

Find Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies here: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **6. Keep cleaning supplies** and procedures available:

- If possible, use store bought disinfectants with a drug identification number (DIN) on the bottle (e.g. Clorox, Lysol, Fantastik, Microban, Zep, etc.)
- If preparing your own solution using household (5.25%) bleach, follow instructions on the label or as follows.

**Regular cleaning:** 1 litre of water (4 cups) per 20 mL (4 teaspoons) bleach

**For blood or body substances:** 1 litre of water (4 cups) per 125ml (half cup) bleach

Find cleaning supplies and procedures here: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **7. Attend routine meetings** with Health Authority partners to keep up to date on communicable diseases in your area.

- Share the name of your site lead to your Public Health team as required

- ☐ **8. Review and update** this Outbreak Plan steps 1-7 annually.

## 2.2 Prevent and Manage Outbreaks

Only the Public Health team can tell you if there is an “outbreak” at your site, based on their assessment of the cases.

### Everyday actions to prevent outbreaks at your site:

#### CHECK:

- ☐ **Hand hygiene** protocols, posters, and supplies are in place
- ☐ **Cleaning/disinfecting** procedures and supplies are in place

#### PREPARE STAFF:

- ☐ **Watch out** for any unusual patterns of illness
- ☐ **Encourage** staff to follow the site’s staff illness policy
- ☐ **Recommend** staff get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19 and have access to their vaccination records

#### MANAGE CLIENTS:

- ☐ **Watch out** for any unusual patterns of illness
- ☐ **Give medical masks** to clients with respiratory symptoms (e.g. sneezing, coughing, runny nose)
- ☐ **Identify spaces** that can be used to isolate clients with symptoms (if possible) or use physical distancing measures by maintaining 2 meters (6 feet) between clients
- ☐ **Be ready** to transport clients with serious illness to health care facilities (See: [Key Health Contacts](#))
- ☐ **Recommend** clients get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19 and have access to their vaccination records

#### CONTACT:

- ☐ **Know** when to contact your Public Health team (see: [Key Health Contacts](#)) for support when needed (e.g. 3 persons with gastrointestinal illness within 4 day period)
- ☐ **Give** your Public Health team key information about the illness:
  - The symptoms reported by people who are sick
  - How many people are sick
  - When the illnesses started
  - Any possible explanations for the symptoms of any clients
  - Track and Report: if more clients are ill with the same symptoms (optional to use the [TPH Illness Monitoring Log](#))
- ☐ **Create** a plan with your Public Health team on what information can be shared with clients

# During an Outbreak:

## What to do During an Outbreak

**Remember, only Public Health can declare an outbreak.**

If Public Health declares an outbreak:

### COORDINATE:

- ☐ **Confirm** key contact names and meetings with your Public Health leads
- ☐ **Report** to your Public Health leads if more clients are ill with the same symptoms
- ☐ **Tell** BC Housing or other Association contacts of situation
- ☐ **Share** updates with staff and clients

### PREPARE STAFF:

- ☐ **Put** your [outbreak plan](#) into action
- ☐ **Display** posters and signs for staff and clients
- ☐ **Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)** when caring for symptomatic clients or when cleaning
- ☐ **Report** new or worsening symptoms, and get tested as directed by Public Health
- ☐ **Keep up preventative actions:** handwashing, physical distancing, increased cleaning, masking, and keeping up-to-date with vaccinations

### MANAGE CLIENTS:

- ☐ **Isolate** symptomatic clients as directed by Public Health
- ☐ **Limit** visitors and group activities/events
- ☐ **Support** recommended testing of clients (on or offsite based on Public Health direction)
- ☐ Transport clients with serious illness to health care facilities
  - Notify facility and transporters of possible outbreak
- ☐ **Encourage** clients to report new or worsening symptoms
- ☐ **Encourage** hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (cleaning hands, covering coughs and throwing away used tissues)
- ☐ **Encourage** clients to get vaccinated as recommended for influenza (flu) and COVID-19

# After an Outbreak:

## What to do After an Outbreak

☐ 1. Public Health will determine when an outbreak is over

☐ 2. Work on preventing another outbreak by following the “[Everyday Actions to Prevent Outbreaks at your Site](#)”

☐ 3. Review with staff and update your [Communicable Disease Prevention and Outbreak Plan](#) with details on:

What went well?

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What did we learn?

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What would we do differently?

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Were there any broader problems outside of our organization?  
e.g. trouble contacting Public Health, slow responses from other organizations.

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Who is going to follow up to address the identified problems?

Assigned follow up name and date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2.3 Key Health Contacts

Complete the following table with names (as available) in your Health Authority.

Last updated on: \_\_\_\_\_

| Role                                                             | Name   Phone   Email   Fax | Comments |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Communicable Disease Public Health Team</b>                   |                            |          |
| • Respiratory Illnesses                                          |                            |          |
| • Gastrointestinal Illnesses                                     |                            |          |
| • Other Illnesses                                                |                            |          |
| <b>Local Mental Health Team</b>                                  |                            |          |
| <b>Harm Reduction Supply Access</b>                              |                            |          |
| • Safer Injection/Smoking Supplies                               |                            |          |
| • Take Home Naloxone kits and Facility Boxes                     |                            |          |
| • Overdose Prevention Site Resources                             |                            |          |
| • Health Authority Harm Reduction Coordinator                    |                            |          |
| <b>Primary Care Provider associated with site (if available)</b> |                            |          |
| <b>Nearby Emergency Department</b>                               |                            |          |
| <b>Urgent and Primary Care Centre</b>                            |                            |          |
| <b>Cultural or Indigenous Liaison</b>                            |                            |          |
| <b>Other (Specify)</b>                                           |                            |          |
| <b>Other (Specify)</b>                                           |                            |          |