

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (17) in DH/SEB/CD/8/19/1
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25 November 2009

Dear Medical Superintendent of private hospital,

Vigilant against viral gastroenteritis

I would like to draw your attention to the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in your hospital as we are approaching the traditional peak season of the disease.

Viral gastroenteritis, commonly caused by noroviruses, is a frequent cause of outbreaks in institutions. Norovirus outbreaks may occur throughout the year but are known to occur more frequently in winter months. Although norovirus infection is usually mild and self-limiting, they are highly infectious and may result in outbreaks that are difficult to control. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever and malaise. The infection can spread through consumption of contaminated food or direct contact with the vomitus or excreta of the infected persons.

We would like to seek your assistance in advising your staff and patients to take precaution against norovirus infection. In particular,

- ✧ Apply standard and contact precautions for suspected case. Put on glove, gown, surgical mask, eye protection for close patient contact or handling potentially contaminated articles;
- ✧ Practice scrupulous hand hygiene. After gloves are removed, hands should be routinely washed with soap and water, or disinfected with alcohol hand rub if not visibly soiled;
- ✧ Isolate or cohort suspected case until symptoms have subsided for 48 hours;
- ✧ Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (by adding 1 part of 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution to 49 parts of water);
- ✧ Educate patient on personal hygiene and hand hygiene, e.g. wash hands thoroughly using liquid soap before meals and after using the toilet.



Staff with vomiting or diarrhoea and who may be epidemiologically linked to an outbreak should be advised to refrain from work until 48 hours after recovery. If you notice an increase in the number of patients or staff of your hospital with symptoms of acute gastroenteritis, please report the Central Notification Office of CHP as soon as possible via fax (2477 2770) or phone (2477 2772) during office hours, or call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) outside office hours. CHP will provide advice in the management of such cases and control measures. For more information on norovirus, please visit the website of CHP at http://www.chp.gov.hk/content.asp?lang=en&info_id=33&id=24&pid=9 and the website of Hospital Authority at <http://www3.ha.org.hk/idctc/document/Norovirus.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

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