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Dear operators / managers/ infection control officers of residential care homes,

Viral gastroenteritis outbreaks associated with Norovirus

Recently there has been an increase in institutional outbreaks of viral gastroenteritis (GE) caused by norovirus (or norwalk-like virus). I am writing to bring your attention to the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in residential care settings.

Norovirus is a common cause of viral gastroenteritis in Hong Kong. It tends to be more active towards winter months. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever and malaise. Outbreaks not uncommonly occur in institutional settings like schools, kindergartens, child care centres, and elderly homes.

Strict personal, food and environmental hygiene with particular attention on handling of vomitus and faecal matter is important to prevent viral gastroenteritis outbreaks in residential care settings:



衛生防護中心乃衛生
署轄下執行疾病預防
及控制的專業架構
*The Centre for Health
Protection is a
professional arm of the
Department of Health
for disease prevention
and control*

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating and after going to toilets and handling vomitus or faecal matter.
- Wear gloves while disposing of vomitus and faeces, and wash hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect soiled linens, clothes and surfaces promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (1:49).
- Maintain good indoor ventilation

- Make sure that food, particularly seafood and shellfish, is cooked thoroughly
- Staff developing vomiting or diarrhoea should refrain from work and seek medical advice.

If you notice an increase in the number of residents or staff with symptoms of viral gastroenteritis, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 24772770 or Tel: 24772772. CHP will give advice on the management of such cases and take appropriate control measures.

For more information, please visit the website of CHP at (http://www.chp.gov.hk/health_topics.asp?lang=en&id=24&pid=9).

Yours sincerely,



(Dr Teresa CHOI)

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