

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (35) in DH/SEB/CD/8/19/1
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23 December 2011

Dear Doctor,

Vigilant against viral gastroenteritis

I would like to draw your attention to the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in the community as we are approaching the traditional peak season of the disease. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) recorded three institutional outbreaks of viral gastroenteritis last week (11-17 December), as compared with 0 and 2 outbreaks in the preceding two weeks.

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 infections are usually mild and self-limiting, they are highly infectious and may result in outbreaks that are difficult to control. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, 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 providing the following health advices to the patients and persons who take care of them. In particular,



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
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disease prevention and
control

1. Maintain high standards of personal, food and environmental hygiene;
2. Wash hands before handling food and eating, and after going to the toilet;
3. Cook all food, particularly shellfish, thoroughly before consumption;
4. Refrain from work or school, and seek medical advice if one is suffering from vomiting or diarrhea;
5. Clean up vomitus appropriately:
 - ✧ Keep other people away from the contaminated area;

- ✧ Wear gloves and mask throughout the disinfection procedure;
- ✧ Use disposable towels to wipe away all the vomitus from the periphery inward. Then apply 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (by adding 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water) to the contaminated surface and adjacent areas (e.g. within two metres of the vomitus);
- ✧ Leave bleach on the soiled surface for about 30 minutes to allow time for the bleach to inactivate viruses. Then rinse the surface with clean water. Leave the surface air dry;
- ✧ Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- ✧ Never use floor mops for cleaning up the vomitus.

If you suspect an viral gastroenteritis outbreak occurring in an institution, please report to 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 infection, please visit the website of CHP at http://www.chp.gov.hk/content.asp?lang=en&info_id=33&id=24&pid=9.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health