

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (144) in DH/SEB/CD/8/19/1

15 March 2017

Dear Doctor,

Vigilance against acute gastroenteritis

I would like to draw your attention to the latest situation of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) and enlist your support in the prevention of the disease.

The surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health showed a recent increase in the activity of AGE. The number of institutional outbreaks of AGE has increased from three in the week ending 25 February to 11 and 12 in the past two weeks respectively. In the first three days of this week, five AGE outbreaks have been recorded. Besides, the sentinel surveillance based at General Outpatient Clinics and child care centres/kindergartens also recorded corresponding increases in AGE activity.

AGE is usually caused by norovirus or rotavirus infection. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever and malaise. These viruses can be transmitted by consumption of contaminated food, contact with the vomitus or excreta of the infected persons, contaminated objects and aerosol spread with contaminated droplets of splashed vomitus. They are highly infectious and may result in outbreaks that are difficult to control. AGE outbreaks may occur throughout the year but are known to occur more frequently in winter months.

We would like to seek your assistance in providing the following health advice to your patients and persons who take care of them. In particular,

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 suffering from vomiting or diarrhea;
5. Clean up vomitus appropriately:
 - Keep other people away from the area during the cleaning process.
 - Wear gloves and a mask while removing the vomitus.
 - Use disposable towels to wipe away all the vomitus from outside inward, before applying diluted bleach (1 in 49) to the surface and the neighbouring area (e.g. within 2 metres of the vomitus).
 - Leave bleach on the soiled surface for 15-30 minutes to allow time for the bleach to inactivate viruses before rinsing the surface with water and mop dry.
 - Floor mops should not be used for cleaning the vomitus.
 - Wash hands thoroughly afterwards

If you suspect an acute 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.

Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
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