



Outbreak Preparedness Toolkit

Enteric Outbreak Table Top Activity Participant's Guide

Time Required: 45 to 60 min

Target Audience: Individuals involved with outbreak (OB) management at the facility, such as IPAC Leads/Back-ups, Nurse Managers (including evening and weekend), Directors of Care, Administrators, IPAC Champions, New hires (RNs, RPNs, PSWs)

Introduction

A tabletop exercise is a discussion based event that uses a progressive simulated scenario, together with a series of scripted injects to make participants consider the impact of a potential health emergency on existing plans, procedures and capacities. This exercise will walk through an enteric outbreak scenario. Let's get prepared!

Enteric Outbreak Definitions (Ministry of Health, May 2022):

- Confirmed Outbreak Definition
 - Two or more cases meeting the case definition with a common epidemiological link (e.g., specific unit or floor, same caregiver) with initial onset within a 48-hour period.
- Suspect Outbreak Definition
 - If an outbreak is suspected, notify the local board of health (public health unit) to support with the investigation and management. The case definition in an outbreak is dependent on the presenting signs and symptoms and circumstances. It may vary between outbreaks and also vary during an outbreak. Symptoms must not be attributed to

another cause (e.g., medication side effects, laxatives, diet or prior medical condition) and are not present or incubating upon admission and at least one of the following must be met:

- Two or more episodes of diarrhea (i.e., loose/watery bowel movements) within a 24-hour period OR
- Two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period; OR
- One or more episodes of diarrhea AND one or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period.

** Note: Suspect Outbreak notifications reported to Toronto Public Health on weekends and holidays are followed up on next business day; Confirmed Outbreak notifications are addressed via lrct@toronto.ca 7 days/week*

Objectives

- Identify existing response protocols/plans at participants' local facilities.
- Promote inter-professional collaboration, coordination and communication.
- Emphasize importance of communication among staff at a long-term care facility or retirement home, with Toronto Public Health and IPAC hub, and to patients/families.
- Orient participants to the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in an enteric outbreak at the facility.

Instructions

Read through the following enteric outbreak scenario and questions below to engage in discussions and next step planning as the scenario evolves. Questions are presented at various stages of the scenario and the decisions made will help guide the outcomes of the scenario. This exercise is intended to be an informal, inclusive and non-judgemental environment. The participant worksheet that accompanies this facilitator guide can be used to record discussions and answers to the questions.

Facilitator may print off the participant worksheet for each participant to record their answers.

Activity

Enteric Outbreak Scenario

Background

Apple Tree is a retirement home with 35 residents and 45 staff. It is comprised of 3 units: Willow, Birch and Maple. All resident rooms are single occupancy and there is one communal dining space for all residents as well as one shared activity space. There is no memory care unit at the facility.

April 4

Resident Red Spartan, on the Willow Unit, reported symptoms of nausea and 3 episodes of diarrhea to the RN at the facility. Red was recently at an overnight stay with their family and had returned on April 3, 2022. Red has no roommates, is up to date in their COVID-19 vaccinations and has had no known exposures to a COVID-19 case. Assessment was completed and non-infectious causes of infection ruled out (e.g. no change in medication or diet, not related to any underlying medical condition).

1. What additional information would be important to gather from the facility?

2. What are the next steps that should be taken by the Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) and/or other staff at the facility?

April 4 (continued)

There were no reports of any other symptomatic residents or staff on Willow Unit or throughout the entire facility and no staff sick calls at this time. Red Spartan remains in DCP and had several more episodes of diarrhea and vomiting overnight into April 5.

April 5

Red Spartan's COVID-19 results came back negative this morning and stool sample results are still pending. Two additional residents on Willow Unit (Golden Delicious and Crisp Macintosh) report several episodes of gastroenteritis symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea. One staff member, who had cared for all three symptomatic residents on Willow unit, called in sick with similar symptoms. The staff and residents that reported ill are up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccinations. The nurse manager on the unit reported the symptomatic residents to the ICP) Occupational health notified the ICP regarding the staff member's absence.

3. Does this meet an outbreak definition?

4. What are your immediate control measures?

April 5

You contact your Toronto Public Health Liaison, who confirms that the confirmed outbreak definition is met and they declare a confirmed enteric outbreak on Willow Unit. They ask you to establish an Outbreak Management Team (OMT) and schedule a meeting. Toronto Public Health will attend the meeting along with a representative from your affiliated hospital Infection Prevention and Control hub. The OMT meets that afternoon and you discuss the next steps.

5. What are some of the priorities you discuss and identify at the OMT meeting?

April 6

On April 6, Red Spartan the results came back positive for Norovirus and residents Crisp Macintosh and Golden Delicious results came back negative for COVID-19. Red Spartan's symptoms subsided late evening April 5 and residents Crisp Macintosh and Golden Delicious remain symptomatic. There have been no further reports of

symptomatic residents or staff on Willow Unit or throughout the entire facility and no staff sick calls.

6. What are the next steps that should be taken by the ICP and/or other staff at the facility?

April 7-11

Residents Crisp Macintosh and Golden Delicious results came back positive for Norovirus on April 7 and there were no further reports of any symptomatic residents or staff on Willow Unit or throughout the entire facility over the next few days. TPH declared the Confirmed OB over on April 11, 2022.

Debrief Discussion Questions

- 1. When can contact precautions be removed for the affected residents?**

- 2. What steps would you take if resident Crisp Macintosh reported only one episode of diarrhea and no vomiting within a 24 hour period and does not meet the case definition?**

3. What steps would you take if resident Red Spartan had an asymptomatic roommate?

4. What went well during this exercise?

5. What did not go well?

6. What are some areas for improvement and/or ideas to incorporate into the workplace?

Feedback

Thank you for completing the activity. We want to hear your feedback. Please complete this short survey (1-2 min) so we can continue to improve the tools.

https://s.tphsurvey.chkmkt.com/TPH_OBPrep_Toolkit



Additional Resources/References

- World Health Organization. (2017). WHO simulation exercise manual: a practical guide and tool for planning, conducting and evaluating simulation exercises for outbreaks and public health emergency preparedness and response. World Health Organization.
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/254741>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO
- [Ministry of Health and Long Term Care: Recommendation for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long Term Care \(2018\)](#)
- [Ministry of Health Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix 1: Case Definitions and Disease-Specific Information. Disease: Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Institutions and Public Hospitals \(2022\)](#)
- [Toronto Public Health: Infection Prevention & Control Information for Long Term Care Homes & Retirement Homes](#)
 - Click the above link to access the TPH tools, such as TPH Outbreak Alert Sign, Enteric Line List, Initial Outbreak Notification Form, Specimen Collection/Testing and more!
- [PHO General Test Requisition](#)
- [PHO Kit and Test Ordering Instructions](#)
- [TPH Outbreak Transfer Notification form](#)

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