

GASTRO PACK FOR CHILDCARE CENTRES

What is the purpose of this information pack?

This package has been produced to assist childcare centres in the event of an outbreak of gastroenteritis and provides information on its early identification, prevention and control.

Who needs to read it and be familiar with it?

All childcare workers and, in particular, managers of the centre should have access to and read the information provided in this pack. This will help to ensure early identification and response to gastroenteritis outbreaks and can mean fewer people (children and staff) with gastroenteritis in your childcare centre.

When will you need to use it?

The pack will be of use in the event of a gastroenteritis outbreak in your childcare centre. NSW Health defines an outbreak as two or more people with sudden onset of vomiting and/or diarrhoea within 24 hours of each other in any institution.

Who should I contact?

Gastroenteritis in an institution, like a childcare centre, among people of any age and food borne illness in 2 or more related cases should be notified to your local Public Health Unit (PHU). The general manager (or their delegates) of childcare centres should notify their local PHU of such an outbreak. A list of NSW PHUs is provided over the page.

How can the Public Health Unit (PHU) help and what is their role?

Your local PHU can assist by providing advice and support in the management and control of an outbreak of gastroenteritis in a childcare centre. They may also be able to provide feedback on the most likely cause of the outbreak. PHU staff have expertise in managing infectious disease outbreaks.

What is in this pack?

Section 1: Recognising and managing an outbreak of gastroenteritis in your centre

Section 2: Gastroenteritis in children fact sheet

Section 3: What to do in case of an outbreak of gastroenteritis: infection control

Section 4: Signage

Section 5: Listing/report of sick children and staff

Section 6: Information for parents

Public Health Units	Contact Phone Number
Goulburn Office	02 4824 1840
Albury Office	02 6080 8900
Broken Hill Office	08 8080 1499
Dubbo Office	02 6841 5569
Bathurst Office	02 6339 5601
Newcastle Office	02 4924 6477
Tamworth Office	02 6764 8000
Port Macquarie Office	02 6588 2750
Lismore Office	02 6620 7500
Hornsby Office	02 9477 9400
Gosford Office	02 4349 4845
Randwick Office	02 9382 8333
Wollongong Office	02 4221 6700
Camperdown/ Liverpool Office	02 9515 9420
Penrith Office	02 4734 2022
Parramatta Office	02 9840 3603

NSW HEALTH GASTRO PACK SECTION 1: RECOGNISING AND MANAGING AN OUTBREAK OF ***GASTROENTERITIS*** IN YOUR CHILDCARE CENTRE

Gastro Pack Resources

Two or more people with diarrhoea and/or vomiting in your childcare centre at one time



Refer to section 2: Gastroenteritis in children fact sheet

Steps to be **taken** within 24 hours of recognition of the outbreak



Institute infection control measures



Refer to section 3: Infection control for childcare centres

Contact your local PHU & seek advice on managing the outbreak



Refer to section 5: Listing of sick children and staff
PHU:
Ph no:

Advise all staff and parents/guardians of children



Refer to section 6: Information to parents/guardians

Post signage at entrance of facility and on bathroom doors



Refer to section 4: Attention visitors and hand washing signs

Monitoring and surveillance of children and staff



Refer to section 3: Infection control for childcare centres

Gastro Pack Section 2: NSW Health Factsheet

Gastroenteritis in children

Gastroenteritis is commonly caused by viral infections resulting in vomiting and/or diarrhoea. The viruses are easily spread from person to person. Thorough washing of hands with soap and running water may help to prevent spread.

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (gastro) is a very common illness in infants and children. It is usually caused by viruses that infect the bowel. Typically, gastro begins with vomiting. Children then develop frequent, watery diarrhoea. Often children may have stomach pain and fever with the diarrhoea. Some children may have a runny nose, or a sore throat. It tends to be more common during winter months.

Gastro usually lasts for two to four days. It may take a week or so for the poos to become normal.

Some bacteria may also cause vomiting and/or diarrhoea in children. Higher or more prolonged fevers, more severe tummy pain, and blood or mucus with the diarrhoea, may suggest that gastro is caused by bacteria. These bacterial infections are sometimes linked to food poisoning.

Who is at risk?

Gastro is particularly common in children under 5 years of age; however anyone can be affected, including adults. Children are particularly at risk of getting dehydrated. If not treated this may have serious, life threatening consequences. Most children in Australia do not develop dehydration and can safely be treated at home.

How is gastro spread?

Viral gastro can be easily spread from person to person. A person may shake hands with someone who has the virus on their hands and become infected. A person may also be infected from contaminated objects or food. It is very important to keep children with gastro away from other children outside of the immediate family. They should not go to day-care, kindergarten or school whilst they are sick.

How is gastro prevented?

Although it is difficult to prevent gastroenteritis, basic hygiene measures can greatly reduce the risk of gastro. This involves washing your hands after going to the toilet, changing nappies, and before preparing or eating meals. Hands should be washed with soap and running water for at least ten seconds.

Cleaning surfaces that children frequently touch with detergent and warm water daily is recommended. During outbreak situations prompt disinfection of contaminated surfaces with chlorine bleach-based cleaners such as chlorhexidine should be undertaken. Gloves should be worn when cleaning and all soiled clothing should be separately washed.

All food and water that may be contaminated should be disposed of.

Regularly educating and reminding children in your child care facility about proper hand washing each time they go to the toilet is important. Age appropriate signs can be placed in the bathroom as a reminder.

You can prevent gastroenteritis caused by Rotavirus by immunising children. Immunisation is recommended and is free for children under 6 months of age. In NSW, the vaccine is given as 2 doses, at two and four months of age, with completion of the course by 24 weeks of age.

What to do about gastro?

Most children with gastro recover quickly. The major concern with gastro is that children can become dehydrated (dry) due to loss of fluid in the vomit and diarrhoea. Younger children, or children with other health problems, may become dehydrated more quickly. Encouraging children to drink fluids is very important. Please refer to section 6 of this pack for the fluids to use. Medicines to stop vomiting and/or diarrhoea are usually not helpful and can cause other problems in children.

Children who have gastro should be kept at home for at least 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhoea. These children should also not swim in pools for at least 2 weeks after having any diarrhoea. Parents should be advised about gastro in children and prompted to act accordingly.

Staff will need to take a proactive role and supervise very young children in the bathroom during a gastro outbreak.

What is the public health response?

Childcare centres should notify their local public health unit whenever there are two or more people with gastroenteritis in their childcare centre within 24 hours of each other.

Public health units are able to:

- advise on how to identify an outbreak
- advise on how to control the outbreak
- help investigate outbreaks to determine the source and mode of transmission
- advise on the exclusion of children with viral gastroenteritis from your childcare centre.

For further information about controlling outbreaks, please visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/infect/diseases.html and scroll down to Gastroenteritis (viral)

Further information - Public Health Units in NSW

For more information please contact your doctor, local public health unit or community health centre
 - look under NSW Government at the front of the White Pages

Location	Number	Location	Number
Hornsby	02 9477 9400	Goulburn	02 4824 1840
Gosford	02 4349 4845	Albury	02 6080 8900
Randwick	02 9382 8333	Broken Hill	08 8080 1499
Wollongong	02 4221 6700	Dubbo	02 6841 5569
Camperdown	02 9515 9420	Bathurst	02 6339 5601
Liverpool	02 9515 9420	Tamworth	02 6764 8000
Parramatta	02 9840 3603	Port Macquarie	02 6588 2750
Matraville	02 9311 2707	Lismore	02 6620 7500
Penrith	02 4734 2022	Newcastle	02 4924 6477
NSW Department of Health	North Sydney	02 9391 9000	
NSW Health website	www.health.nsw.gov.au		© NSW Department of Health 2011

For more information on gastroenteritis infections see the NSW Health website for further fact sheets;

- Norovirus fact sheet <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/norovirus.html>
- Rotavirus fact sheet <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/rotavirus.html>
- Controlling gastroenteritis outbreaks fact sheet
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/gastroenteritiscontr.html>

NSW HEALTH GASTRO PACK SECTION 3:

What to do in case of an outbreak of gastroenteritis:

INFECTION CONTROL FOR CHILDCARE CENTRES

Two or more children with vomiting and/or diarrhoea in your facility constitute a gastroenteritis outbreak. An outbreak of gastroenteritis can be very difficult to control as it is very infectious. Below are some guidelines for your facility to follow when dealing with an outbreak:

Hand washing and hand hygiene

Hand washing is the most effective way of controlling gastroenteritis pathogens. The following precautions should be in place to ensure thorough hand washing:

- Make sure that hand washing facilities are available for staff, children and visitors.
- Staff and children's hands should be washed as per the following steps-
 - Using running water and liquid soap, vigorously wash your hands all over for 10 seconds, paying special attention to palms, back of hands, in between fingers, under finger nails and around wrists
 - Rinse your hands thoroughly for 10 seconds and turn off tap using a paper towel
 - Dry your hands thoroughly with a new paper towel.
- Hands should always be washed after personal toileting and before preparing or eating food
- Alert staff, children and visitors to the outbreak and the need for thorough and frequent hand washing, and post hand washing signs in toilet and care areas.
- Staff and visitors should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 10 seconds and dry their hands with a disposable or clean towel, even if they have been wearing gloves:
 - before and after any child care
 - after contact with a person with gastroenteritis
 - after going to the toilet
 - after changing nappies
 - before eating or preparing/handling food.
- Staff will need to supervise the washing of children's hands and wash the hands of younger children after they use the toilet.
- Alcohol based hand solutions can be used by staff if proper hand washing facilities are not available
- Refer to the NSW health website for information on hand hygiene.
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/hai/tp_hygiene.asp

Isolation and restriction

The following precautions should be taken to isolate and restrict the spread of gastroenteritis:

- Affected children should be isolated from the rest of the group as soon as possible once symptoms appear. If possible, this may involve either dedicating a room to this group or sending the affected children home.
- Children with gastro should not go to day-care, kindergarten or school for at least 24 hours after their symptoms have ceased.
- Staff members with gastro should be excluded from work for 48 hours after their symptoms have ceased.
- Visitors should be discouraged from attending the premises while the outbreak is occurring.

Cleaning

Contaminated surfaces, toys, and utensils may be vehicles for spread of infections. Daily vigorous cleaning of toys and surfaces using hot soapy water is generally sufficient to get rid of any germs.

During an outbreak, the following additional measures should be adhered to:

- Common areas should be cleaned at least twice daily with a neutral detergent. Particular attention should be paid to areas that are frequently touched by children and carers.

- Common bathroom areas should also be cleaned with a neutral detergent at least twice daily or more frequently depending on how often they are used. This includes common touch points such as toilet seats, flush handles, hand basin taps, toilet door handles, handrails, tables and chairs.
- Surfaces or objects that have been exposed to vomit or faeces must be thoroughly cleaned as soon as possible with hot water and a neutral detergent.
- Where possible, disinfect hard surfaces and objects with freshly prepared hypochlorite 1,000 ppm (0.1 per cent) solution.
- Leave surfaces for 10 minutes then rinse with cold water.
- Allow objects to dry thoroughly after they have been cleaned.
- Items that cannot be cleaned between use and play should not be made available for communal use during an outbreak (for example soft toys and 'play dough').
- Ensure door handles are washed and dried before re-use or at least twice daily.
- Do not share eating utensils or drinking containers. All eating utensils or drinking containers are to be washed and stored dry between uses.
- Staff clothing, or over-clothing, should be washed daily. Another option is for staff to have a change of clothing available for 'accidents' or after dealing with potentially infectious situations. These measures also help to protect the families of childcare staff when they return home.

If a child vomits or has diarrhoea

- Put on gloves and protective overwear
- Clean up the child
- Wash the child's hands
- Remove the bulk of the soil/spill with absorbent paper towel
- Remove any visible soiling by cleaning with water and detergent
- Put soiled clothing in a plastic bag for parent to take home and wash
- Remove gloves and gown
- Thoroughly wash your hands.

Protect yourself

When handling vomit or faeces, wear disposable gloves, mask and impermeable protective clothing (eg. a plastic apron). Use disposable towels to remove faeces and vomit, and seal in a plastic bag before disposing of them in the rubbish bin.

Notification

Managers of childcare facilities where an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis is occurring should:

- Report the outbreak to their local PHU. The PHU staff can provide advice and assistance on controlling further spread.
- Alert all parents of the outbreak. Provide parents with the "Information for parents" section of this pack (Section 6).
- Post signage to alert and remind visitors and staff of current outbreak.
- Put up signs in bathrooms to remind staff to wash their hands thoroughly. You could also put up child friendly signs to remind children to wash their hands.
- Document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms and report these to their local PHU (refer to section 5 of this pack: line list). This detail is important to help discover the cause of the illness as well as to assist in measures to prevent further disease.
 - The child's parents should be encouraged to provide information about the child's illness which can then be added to the line list. It would be useful to know whether the child saw a doctor or was hospitalised.
 - Please encourage the parents to have a stool sample collected and to inform the childcare centre of the results.

These guidelines are adapted from the Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing infectious diseases in child care developed by NHMRC in 2005.



Attention Parents

This facility is currently experiencing an outbreak
of **gastroenteritis**
(diarrhoea and vomiting)

Please keep your visit to a minimum and wash
your hands thoroughly with soap and water
before leaving

If you have any questions please discuss with
the person in charge

HAND WASHING SIGNAGE



- Hand washing activity sheet for children available for download at <http://www.comiccompany.co.uk>



Handwashing

HOW TO WASH HANDS

- Use liquid soap and running water
- Wash your hands thoroughly while counting slowly from 1 to 10
- Rinse your hands while slowly counting from 1 to 10
- Turn off the tap with paper towel
- Dry hands well with new paper towel

WHEN TO WASH HANDS

- On arrival (this reduces new germs being introduced to the centre)
- Before handling food, including a baby's bottle
- Before eating
- Before and after changing a nappy
- After removing gloves
- After going to the toilet
- After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit
- After wiping a nose
- Before giving medication
- After handling garbage
- After playing outside
- Before going home (this prevents taking germs home)

WASHING AND RINSING YOUR HANDS SHOULD TAKE ABOUT AS LONG AS SINGING 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' TWICE.



Australian Government
National Health and
Medical Research Council

Staying Healthy in Child Care - Preventing infectious diseases in child care 4th edition

- Hand washing poster for adults available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43poster1.pdf

NSW HEALTH GASTRO PACK SECTION 5:

LISTING OF SICK CHILDREN AND STAFF FOR A GASTROENTERITIS OUTBREAK IN A CHILDCARE CENTRE

This listing is a table in which important information is recorded on each person who is ill with gastroenteritis in an outbreak. This information will assist you in keeping track of sick children and staff, enabling you to implement control measures to stop the outbreak spreading. The information can be collated by your local PHU which will enable PHU staff to determine the nature of the outbreak and likely mode of transmission and to assist in controlling the outbreak.

You can print out and fill in the listing below.

Instructions for use

- Please complete the Listing Form including: childcare centre name, contact person and title, total number of staff and children at the centre, date of first case and the date reported to the PHU.
- Please record details for each person in the childcare centre with gastroenteritis illness. Please use the same listing to record details of the new cases throughout the duration of the outbreak (do not restart the list each day).
- Please consult with parents to provide any missing detail and encourage parents to refer their child to a GP if necessary. To help identify the cause, encourage collection of stool specimens from those who visit their GP. They would need to alert the GP that their child is part of an outbreak.
- **In the event of an outbreak this listing should be faxed or emailed daily to your local PHU.** Please ensure all details are completed for each case. If you have any questions please telephone your local PHU.

Public Health Units	Contact Phone Number
Goulburn Office	02 4824 1840
Albury Office	02 6080 8900
Broken Hill Office	08 8080 1499
Dubbo Office	02 6841 5569
Bathurst Office	02 6339 5601
Newcastle Office	02 4924 6477
Tamworth Office	02 6764 8000
Port Macquarie Office	02 6588 2750
Lismore Office	02 6620 7500
Hornsby Office	02 9477 9400
Gosford Office	02 4349 4845
Randwick Office	02 9382 8333
Wollongong Office	02 4221 6700
Camperdown Office	02 9515 9420
Liverpool Office	02 9515 9420
Penrith Office	02 4734 2022
Parramatta Office	02 9840 3603

NSW Health Gastro Pack Section 5: Gastroenteritis Listing for Sick Children and Staff in a Childcare centre

Name of Childcare centre: _____ Number of children in facility, Total: _____ Per Day: _____ No. of staff: _____
 Contact Person: _____ Position Title: _____ Telephone No: _____ Fax No: _____ Email: _____
 PHU Notified (tick) Date Reported to PHU: _____ Date First Case: _____ Unique name/number for outbreak (PHU to complete): _____

Case No.	CASE DETAILS					DESCRIPTION OF ILLNESS			OUTCOME
	Full name	Parent name contact No (or Staff)	DOB & Age (yrs)	Gender	Days attending facility	Date/time of Onset	Duration of illness (hours)	Symptoms (see key)	Parents may be able to advise if the child was seen by Dr (DR) or Hospitalised (H) and if a specimen was collected (Y/N) and a cause identified (Enter germ name)

Symptoms Key: V=Vomiting D=Diarrhoea BD=Bloody Diarrhoea F=Fever>38.5C N= Nausea AC=Abdominal (Stomach) Cramps

Please use the same Line Listing for new cases – do not start a new one each day

NSW HEALTH GASTRO PACK SECTION 6: GASTROENTERITIS IN CHILDREN: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Sample letter for parents:

To: All Parents, Carers and Staff Members of [Your childcare centre]

Dear Parents,

Re: Viral gastroenteritis

We have identified that a number of children within [Your childcare centre] are ill at the moment with symptoms of gastroenteritis including vomiting and/or diarrhoea and fever.

To prevent the further spread of infection and to ensure the general health and well being of the whole facility, the [Your Area] Public Health Unit, has recommended the following to all parents:

- Please inform the childcare centre if your child is unwell and keep your child at home until at least **24hrs** after vomiting and/or diarrhoea has completely stopped.
- If your child has diarrhoea, please see your doctor and take this letter with you. Please ask your doctor to order a stool test requesting "MC&S and Rotavirus/Norovirus", to determine a cause of diarrhoeal illness for your child.
- If your child has diarrhoea, he or she should not swim at any public or private swimming pool for at least 2 weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped.

We would like to thank you for your co-operation in this matter. Attached to this letter is a 2 page information sheet about viral gastroenteritis in children should parents/carers require further information. Alternatively please refer to the NSW Health (<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au>) or the Children's Hospital at Westmead (<http://www.chw.edu.au>) websites for more information.

Yours sincerely

Facility manager

Gastroenteritis in children fact sheet

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (gastro) is a very common illness in infants and children. It is most commonly characterised by vomiting and/or diarrhoea and usually caused by viruses that infect the bowel. Typically, gastro begins with vomiting. Children then develop frequent, watery diarrhoea.

Gastro usually lasts for two to four days. It may take a week or so for the poos to become normal.

Who does it affect?

It is particularly common in children under 5 years of age; however anyone is susceptible to the infection, including adults.

How do people get gastroenteritis?

Viral gastroenteritis is extremely infectious and is very easily passed on from person to person. The poos and vomit of infected people are very contagious. A person may shake hands with someone who has the virus on their hands and become infected. Contaminated objects and food can also spread the disease.

What to do about gastro?

Most children in Australia with gastro recover quickly. The major concern with gastro is that children can become dehydrated (dry) due to loss of fluid in the vomit and diarrhoea. Younger children, or children with other health problems, may become dehydrated more quickly. Please consult your doctor or hospital, as soon as possible, if you have any concerns about your child's progress - especially if:

- Your child is less than six months old
- Your child has other health problems
- You are unable to get your child to take the right amount of fluids
- Your child keeps vomiting
- Your child is very tired or drowsy
- There is blood or mucus in your child's poo
- Your child has ongoing tummy pain
- Your child has high fevers
- Your child has unexpected symptoms (eg pain when passing urine, headache etc)
- Your child does not seem to be getting better.

What to feed your infant child

Acute vomiting and diarrhoea can rapidly lead to dehydration in infants and young children. Lost fluid must be replaced - initially with SUITABLE FLUIDS or BREAST MILK.

- **Suitable fluids;** Oral Rehydration Fluids (available from chemist) are specially formulated to replace lost fluid rapidly during an episode of gastroenteritis.

Clear fluids such as juice, cordial or soft drink may be used with caution if an oral rehydration fluid is not available but they must be diluted otherwise they may make the diarrhoea worse.

How to prepare suitable fluids

<i>Fluid</i>	<i>Dilution</i>	<i>Example</i>
Oral rehydration fluid eg "Gastrolyte" (available from chemist)	As per instructions	(see directions on pack) MIX WITH WATER ONLY
Oral rehydrating Fluid eg "Hydralyte" (Available chemists and some supermarkets)	Pre-prepared as fluid or iceblock	Do not mix with other fluids
Cordial concentrate (not low calorie/low joule)	1 part in 20 parts	5ml (1 teaspoon) plus 100ml water
Soft drink or juice (not low calorie/low joule)	1 part in 5 parts	20ml (1 tablespoon) plus 80mls of water

How much fluid do I give?

- Be patient, give your child small frequent amounts of fluid.
- Aim for at least 5mL fluid per kg body weight each hour.
 - eg - for a 6 kg infant offer: 30mL every hour or 60mL every 2 hours
 - for a 12 kg toddler offer: 60mL every hour or 120mL every 2 hours

Approximate volumes:

Less than 6 months	see your doctor
6-23 months	40 to 60 mL each hour
2-5 years	60 to 100 mL each hour
6-10 years	100 to 120 mL each hour
11-16 years	120 to 160 mL each hour

- It is important to start offering easily digested foods as soon as the vomiting stops and no later than after 24 hours even if the poos are still loose.

What to do for a breastfed infant

- Continue breast feeding on demand or at least every 2 hours.
- In between breast feeds, water or oral rehydration solution may be offered.
- Do not give solids if your child is vomiting

When the vomiting has stopped or after 24 hours:

- Continue 2nd -3rd hourly feeds or on demand.
- In between breast feeds, water or oral rehydration solution may be offered.
- If your baby is on solids introduce simple foods such as rice cereal, potato or pumpkin - even if the poos are still loose.

What to do for the bottle fed infant or older child

While your infant or child is still vomiting:

- Replace formula or usual drinks with oral rehydration fluid (from chemist) or suitable fluids (see table " How to Prepare Suitable Fluids" on previous page)
- Aim to be back to usual strength formula or milk within 24 hours. If not, seek medical advice. Continue giving feeds or drinks every 2-3 hours or more frequently if demanded.
- Offer age appropriate foods at meal times even if the poos are still loose.
- Occasionally children will develop lactose intolerance and the loose poos will continue. Under medical advice he/she will need lactose free milk for approximately 1 month.

Aim to be back to usual strength formula/diet within 24 hours. If not, seek medical advice.

The information in this sheet has been adapted from the Gastroenteritis in Children fact sheet jointly developed by the Children's Hospital at Westmead at <http://www.chw.edu.au> and the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick at <http://www.sch.edu.au>.