

What happens during an outbreak?

Many strategies are used to stop the spread of illness during an outbreak, including:

- Increased cleaning and disinfection.
- Increased focus on hand washing and use of hand sanitizers.
- Use of personal protective equipment (mask, gloves, gown, eye protection) when caring for sick residents.
- Sick residents are encouraged to remain in their rooms while they are unwell or until they are no longer contagious.
- Non-urgent appointments may be rescheduled until after the outbreak is over.
- New admissions and transfers between facilities may be postponed.
- Large group activities may be cancelled or changed.



For more information about outbreaks

Call the Communicable Disease Control Program at:
705-474-1400, ext. 5229
or toll-free at 1-800-563-2808

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

345 Oak Street West,
North Bay, ON P1B 2T2
705-474-1400

70 Joseph Street, Unit 302
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2G5
705-746-5801

myhealthunit.ca

Reviewed September 2019

Outbreaks in Health Care Facilities



What families and visitors need to know

North Bay Parry Sound District
Health Unit

Bureau de santé
du district de North Bay-Parry Sound

What is an outbreak?

An outbreak is a sudden increase in the number of residents and staff who are sick.

Two common types of outbreaks in health care facilities are:

- 1) Respiratory infections (runny nose, sore throat, cough, sneezing, fever)
- 2) Gastrointestinal infections (nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea)

Infections may be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites.

Why are outbreaks declared?

For the health and well-being of residents and staff, it is important to control and stop outbreaks as quickly as possible.

Any illness spread during outbreaks can be life-threatening to residents.

Long-term care and retirement homes are legally required to report outbreaks to the local Medical Officer of Health and work with the Health Unit to try to stop the spread of illness.



Always wash or sanitize your hands:



When you enter and leave the facility



When you enter and leave a resident room



Before and after helping with resident care



Before handling any food or drinks

Can I still visit during an outbreak?

Yes, you can still visit if you are feeling well but there are steps you should take to prevent yourself and others from getting sick.

- **Do not visit if you have any of the following:** fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, upset stomach
- Get your flu shot every year and stay up-to-date with vaccinations.
- Wash your hands well and often with warm water and soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Visit residents in their rooms and avoid common areas.
- Visit only one resident. If you must visit more than one resident, visit the well resident first.
- Wear personal protective equipment (mask, gloves, gown and eye protection) as needed. Signs will be posted or you can check with the nursing station.