

# Checklist For Schools When Outbreaks of Gastroenteritis are Suspected

When an outbreak is suspected, the following is a checklist of activities that need to be accomplished:

<b>Step 1. Gather information to confirm/characterize an outbreak – provide as much of the following as possible.</b>	
<b>Information about ill students and staff:</b>	
Log sheets for collecting this initial information is included in the Handwashing Tool Kit, "Log Sheet: Collection of Information about Ill Students".	
	<p>Names (or number, if names not available) of children and staff who are ill with vomiting or diarrhea. Provide this information by grade and classroom (e.g., for each grade and classroom, fill out a log sheet or provide number ill vs. number well).</p>
	<p>Type of symptoms for each ill individual. When combining data from all ill individuals, be able to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of individuals that have had vomiting _____</li> <li>- # of individuals that have had diarrhea _____</li> <li>- # of individuals with diarrhea that have bloody diarrhea _____</li> <li>- # of individuals with fever, including the highest temperature recorded for each individual with fever _____</li> <li>- average duration of illness (and range of duration, e.g. shortest to longest) _____</li> </ul>
	Date of onset of symptoms for <u>each</u> ill student and staff member.
	<p>Names of individuals who have seen a health care provider. Include contact information for the health care provider, and test results, if known.</p>
<b>Information about ill food service staff:</b>	
Log sheets for collecting this initial information is included in the Handwashing Tool Kit, "Log Sheet: Collection of Information about Ill Staff".	
	A list of food service staff (those who have been ill, and those who have not).
<b>Other information:</b>	
Information not included in the log sheets mentioned above, some can be written in the space provided on this checklist.	
	<p>Total number of children enrolled and staff employed at your school. Students: _____ Staff: _____</p>
	<p>List of extracurricular activities, clubs, or special events that were held during the 2 weeks prior to the first illnesses. Include birthday or holiday treats distributed in individual classrooms.</p>
	School lunch menu (breakfast and lunch) for the 2 weeks prior to the first illness.
	Rosters for students who attend before/after school child care at the school.

<b>Step 2. Contact your public health agency (city, county or state).</b>	
<b>Contact your public health agency (city, county or state) and provide information obtained from above checklist.</b>	
Additional information about contacting your city, county or state public health agency is included in the Handwashing Tool Kit.	
Note:	If further investigation is deemed necessary, it likely will involve contacting ill <u>and</u> well students to determine specific sources of illness. To do this, the public health agency will need a roster of all students, including parent's names, home telephone number, grade, and classroom. This information can be collected on the Handwashing Tool Kit, "Log Sheet: Collection of Information about Ill Students".
<b>Step 3. In conjunction with the cooperating public health agency, implement interim outbreak control measures while the investigation is ongoing.</b>	
	Restrict sharing of foods brought from students'/staffs' homes.
	Restrict students' passing/sharing of any communal food items/snacks in classrooms or elsewhere. Instead, the teacher should hand out items to be shared after washing his/her hands.
	Stop using self-service food bars for school breakfast/lunch (i.e., don't let children serve themselves in any manner which might promote direct hand contact with shared foods).
	Redouble efforts to ensure handwashing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- educate children on proper technique</li> <li>- promote handwashing prior to every snack and meal</li> <li>- provide children adequate time for handwashing prior to eating</li> <li>- make sure that soap dispensers have soap</li> </ul>
	To the extent possible, children and staff who are ill with gastrointestinal symptoms should not be at school.
	Food service staff should not handle food if they have been recently (in the last few weeks) ill with any gastrointestinal symptoms until they can be interviewed/further evaluated by public health professionals.
<b>Step 4. Communications with staff and parents.</b>	
	Communications with staff will need to be conducted by the school to ensure implementation of the recommendations listed above.
	Communications with parents may need to be conducted by the school or district administration (depending on the scope of the problem), and should include assistance from local and state public health officials. The content of such communications can be extremely variable, depending on the situation. Additional information about dealing with parents during an outbreak (including sample letters, and public health agency contact information) is included in the Handwashing Tool Kit.