



OB \_\_\_\_\_  
CDC Use Only

## REPORT OF OUTBREAK OF SUSPECTED VIRAL GASTROENTERITIS

Viral Gastroenteritis Section  
DASH Unit 75  
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### Primary contact for epidemiologic investigation

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
mm/dd/yyyy

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Facsimile \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Outbreak Information

State Outbreak ID \_\_\_\_\_ EFORS code \_\_\_\_\_ Date health department notified \_\_\_\_\_  
(if known) mm/dd/yyyy

Date of first case \_\_\_\_\_  
mm/dd/yyyy

Date of last case \_\_\_\_\_  
mm/dd/yyyy

Location(s) of outbreak: State \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ County (list if several) \_\_\_\_\_

If multistate, list other states \_\_\_\_\_

### Suspected mode of transmission (can check more than one)

- Person-to-person                       Foodborne                       Waterborne  
 Unknown                                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

### If food or waterborne

Implicated food or water source \_\_\_\_\_ Foodhandler implicated? \_\_\_\_\_  
(can check more than one)

- Yes: epidemiologic evidence  
Yes: laboratory evidence  
Yes: suspected, but no evidence  
No

### Setting (if there is an additional setting, please add below in comments)

Nursing home    Assisted Living    Restaurant / Deli / Cafeteria    Hotel    School    Daycare    Camp  
Community    Prison    Ship    Religious Facility    Hospital    Private event    Catered Event  
Work Place    Private Home    Other \_\_\_\_\_ Date of event (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
mm/dd/yyyy

### Illness Characteristics

Number of persons exposed \_\_\_\_\_ Number of persons ill \_\_\_\_\_  
*Number visiting health care provider \_\_\_\_\_ Number hospitalized \_\_\_\_\_ Number deaths \_\_\_\_\_*  
(Categories NOT mutually exclusive)

Symptoms: Number of persons with information \_\_\_\_\_ Median incubation period (hours) \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_  
No. with abdominal cramps \_\_\_\_\_ No. with fever \_\_\_\_\_  
No. with diarrhea \_\_\_\_\_ No. with vomiting \_\_\_\_\_ Median duration of illness (hours) \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_  
No. with other symptom(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SPECIMEN COLLECTION FOR DIAGNOSIS OF NLVs\*

### Clinical Specimens

#### **Stool**

**Timing.** Specimen collection for viral testing should begin on day 1 of the epidemiologic investigation. Any delays to await testing results for bacterial or parasitic agents could preclude establishing a viral diagnosis. Ideally, specimens should be obtained during the acute phase of illness (i.e., within 48--72 hours after onset) while the stools are still liquid or semisolid because the level of viral excretion is greatest then. With the development of sensitive molecular assays, the ability to detect viruses in specimens collected later in the illness has been improved. In specific cases, specimens might be collected later during the illness (i.e., 7--10 days after onset), if the testing is necessary for either determining the etiology of the outbreak or for epidemiologic purposes (e.g., a specimen obtained from an ill foodhandler who might be the source of infection). If specimens are collected late in the illness, the utility of viral diagnosis and interpretation of the results should be discussed with laboratory personnel before tests are conducted.

**Number and Quantity.** Ideally, specimens from  $\geq 10$  ill persons should be obtained during the acute phase of illness. Bulk samples (i.e., 10--50 ml of stool placed in a stool cup or urine container) are preferred, as are acute diarrhea specimens that are loose enough to assume the shape of their containers. Serial specimens from persons with acute, frequent, high-volume diarrhea are useful as reference material for the development of assays. The smaller the specimen and the more formed the stool, the lower the diagnostic yield. Rectal swabs are of limited or no value because they contain insufficient quantity of nucleic acid for amplification.

**Storage and Transport.** Because freezing can destroy the characteristic viral morphology that permits a diagnosis by EM, specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4 C. At this temperature, specimens can be stored without compromising diagnostic yield for 2--3 weeks, during which time testing for other pathogens can be completed. If the specimens have to be transported to a laboratory for testing, they should be bagged and sealed and kept on ice or frozen refrigerant packs in an insulated, waterproof container. If facilities for testing specimens within 2--3 weeks are not available, specimens can be frozen for antigen or PCR testing.

#### **Vomitus**

Vomiting is the predominant symptom among children, and specimens of vomitus can be collected to supplement the diagnostic yield from stool specimens during an investigation. Recommendations for collection, storage, and shipment of vomitus specimens are the same as those for stool specimens.

#### **Serum**

**Timing.** If feasible, acute- and convalescent-phase serum specimens should be obtained to test for a diagnostic  $\geq 4$ -fold rise in IgG titer to NLVs. Acute-phase specimens should be obtained during the first 5 days of symptoms, and the convalescent-phase specimen should be collected from the third to sixth week after resolution of symptoms.

**Number and Quantity.** Ideally, 10 pairs of specimens from ill persons (i.e., the same persons submitting stool specimens) and 10 pairs from well persons (controls) should be obtained. Adults should provide 5--7 ml of blood, and children should provide 3--4 ml.

**Storage.** Specimens should be collected in tubes containing no anticoagulant, and the sera should be spun off and frozen. If a centrifuge is not available, a clot should be allowed to form, and the serum should be decanted and frozen. If this step cannot be accomplished, the whole blood should be refrigerated but not frozen.

#### **Environmental Specimens**

NLVs cannot be detected routinely in water, food, or environmental specimens. Nevertheless, during recent outbreaks (33--36), NLVs have been detected successfully in vehicles epidemiologically implicated as the source of infection. If a food or water item is strongly suspected as the source of an outbreak, then a sample should be obtained as early as possible and stored at 4 C. If the epidemiologic investigation confirms the link, a laboratory with the capacity to test these specimens should be contacted for further testing. If drinking water is suspected, special filtration (45) of large volumes (i.e., 5--100 liters) of water can concentrate virus to facilitate its detection.