



**FOR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES (11/14/08)**  
Central Michigan District Health Department  
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8413  
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## **Guidelines for Controlling Viral Gastro-intestinal Diseases in Healthcare Facilities**

**By Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director, Central Michigan District Health Department**

The Central Michigan District Health Department recommends that long-term care and residential facilities take the following measures when cases of viral gastro-intestinal illness have been identified within the facility:

- Teach and encourage proper hand washing techniques for staff, residents and visitors
- Start a listing of ill residents and employees. Record their onset date and onset time of day.
- If you are requested to fill out questionnaire(s) provided by the health department, please send them back via fax to the designated number.
- When an employee calls in sick, please record the reason for their absence.
- Don't cross-assign staff – leave them assigned to one area to prevent cross contamination.
- Exclude staff who have been ill from patient care and food handling duties for at least three days after their symptoms have resolved.
- Emphasize to staff to use gloves when handling feces or fecally soiled articles or equipment.
- If the Norwalk-like agent is the likely cause of the illnesses, instruct staff to wear masks when cleaning areas grossly soiled with feces or vomitus.
- Institute contact precautions for diapered or incontinent patients who have symptoms of diarrhea.
- Instruct staff to carefully handle feces and fecally contaminated item such as bedpans and soiled laundry to avoid aerosolization.
- Use appropriate cleansers/disinfectants to clean and disinfect soiled environmental surfaces, articles and equipment.
- Put soiled linens, towels, and clothes into washable laundry bags. Don't empty the laundry bags. Place the full opened bag in the washing machine.
- During the outbreak, serve residents their meals in their rooms instead of the common dining area.
- Keep ill residents in their rooms and away from others as much as possible.
- Minimize contact between well and ill residents as much as possible.

**Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director**, Central Michigan District Health Department, serving Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Michigan Department of Community Health