Halton Region Public Health

Outbreak Preparedness
Fall-Winter 2025/2026

IPAC Seminar for LTCH & RH

September 16, 2025

Agenda

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Review of 2024-2025 Season
- Respiratory Outbreak Preparedness
- Influenza Outbreak Preparedness
- Respiratory Virus Tools
- Reporting Cases/Outbreaks
- Holiday Gatherings
- Questions

Roles and Responsibilities

Halton PHU:

- Prevention and Preparedness
- Case & Contact Management
- Outbreak Management
- Coordination and Communication

Halton IPAC Hub:

- Educational supports for IPAC programs
- Supporting implementation of IPAC best practices
- Support assessments and IPAC audits
- Provide mentorship to IPAC leads

Outbreak Trivia

Which 2 respiratory agents accounted for more than half of all respiratory outbreaks in Halton from September 2024 to August 2025?

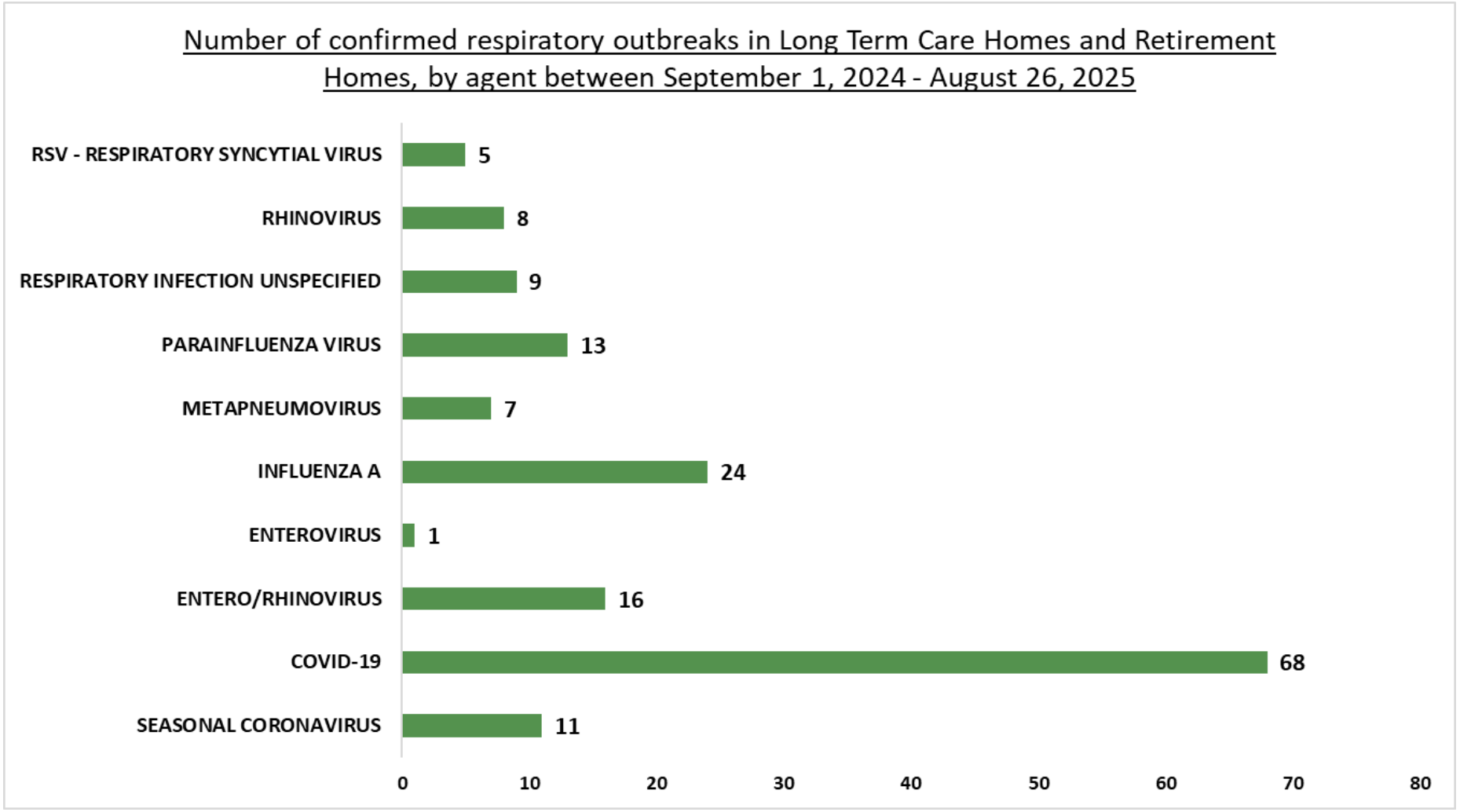
1. RSV and COVID-19
2. Influenza A and Parainfluenza
3. COVID-19 and Influenza A
4. Rhinovirus and Enterovirus

Outbreak Trivia

Which 2 respiratory agents accounted for more than half of all respiratory outbreaks in Halton from September 2024 to August 2025?

1. RSV and COVID-19
2. Influenza A and Parainfluenza
3. **COVID-19 and Influenza A**
4. Rhinovirus and Enterovirus

2024-2025 Season



Outbreak Preparedness

LTC and RH Outbreak Preparedness Checklist

IPAC Policies and Procedures (P&P)

- ☐ Written, site specific and up to date Outbreak Management policies and procedures:
  - Outbreak (OB) surveillance
  - Screening
  - COVID-19, Influenza and RSV vaccination
  - Hand Hygiene (HH)
  - Specimen collection (i.e. Nasopharyngeal NPS swab, stool kits)
  - Masking/PPE
  - Visitors
  - Ventilation
  - Staff training/Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)
  - Routine practices and additional precautions
  - Environmental Services (EVS)
  - Auditing
  - Staff return to work
- ☐ Dedicated staff member(s) on-site, 24/7, to implement OB control measures during an outbreak

Hand Hygiene

- ☐ Verify all Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR) have an alcohol content of 70-90%
- ☐ ABHR and Soap dispensers are full, not topped up and not expired
- ☐ ABHR is available throughout the facility and at point of care

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ☐ A minimum 2-week supply of PPE on hand with a plan in place to proactively monitor supply
- ☐ An ordering process is in place using the PPE Supply Portal
- ☐ Contingency plan in place if supply is interrupted

Laboratory Specimen Supplies/Accessing Laboratory Test Results

- ☐ Adequate supply of NPS available with appropriate expiry date
- ☐ Adequate supply of COVID-19 RAT test kits with appropriate expiry date
- ☐ Stool sample vials (with liquid fixative) have appropriate expiry dates
- ☐ Trained staff onsite to collect specimens
- ☐ Set up an account on OLIS/Connecting Ontario to allow MRP to access test results

Staffing

- ☐ Adequate staffing levels to allow for Surge Capacity during outbreaks

Auditing

- ☐ Complete the IPAC Self-Assessment Audit Tool quarterly and weekly during outbreaks
- ☐ Auditing to be conducted daily, preferably on all shifts during outbreaks for HH, PPE, and EVS

Training

- ☐ Provide PPE training for all staff and visitors
- ☐ Provide HH training for all staff, visitors, and residents
- ☐ Provide environmental cleaning training to EVS staff

Cleaning and Disinfection

- ☐ Disinfectants used have a drug identification number (DIN) and are not past expiry date
- ☐ Follow manufacturers' instructions on dilution, storage, and use of disinfectants
- ☐ High level disinfectants available for use during enteric outbreaks (effective against Norovirus)
- ☐ Increase frequency of cleaning of high touch surfaces during outbreaks

IPAC Policies and Procedures

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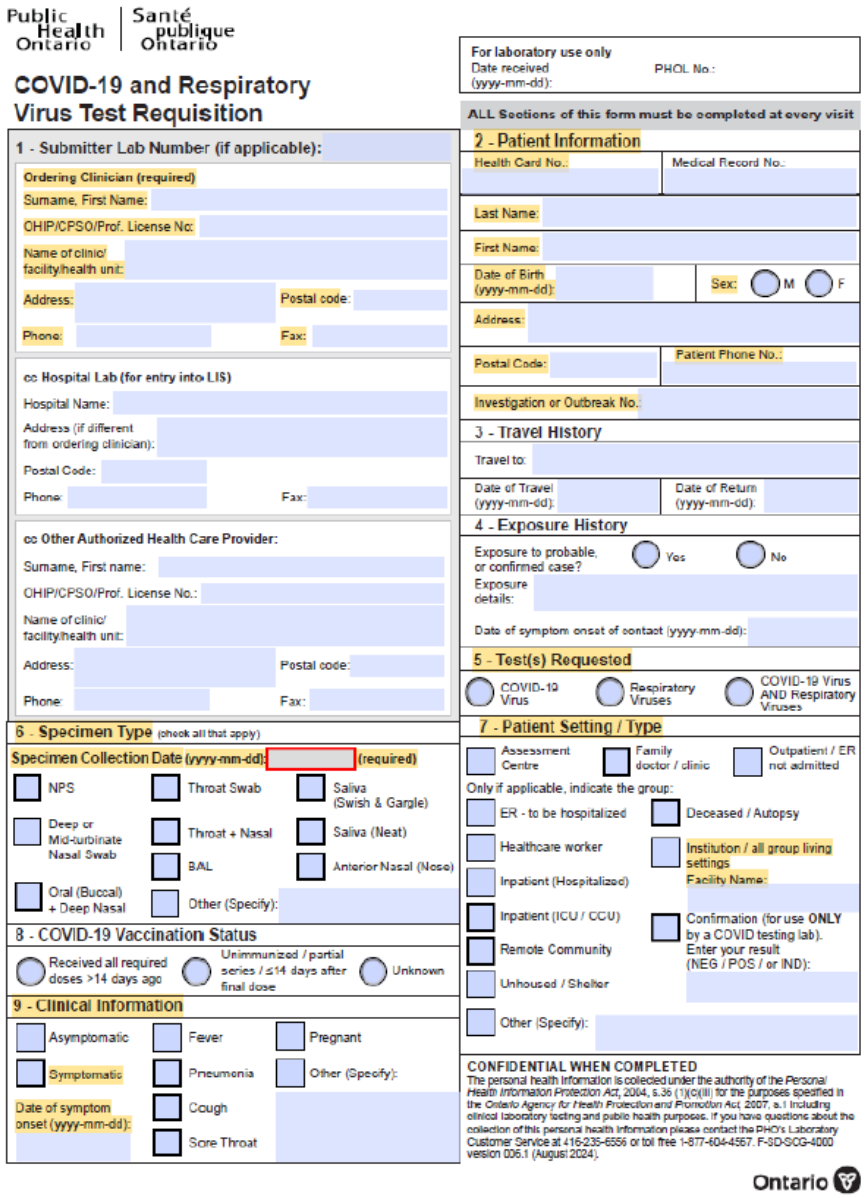
PPE

- ❑ Minimum 2-week supply of PPE
- ❑ Ordering process using the PPE Supply Portal
- ❑ Contingency plan

Lab Specimens/Test Results

- ❑ Adequate supply of NPS
- ❑ Adequate supply of COVID-19 RATs
- ❑ Trained staff to collect specimens
- ❑ OLIS/Connecting Ontario for test results



Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario

COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Test Requisition

For laboratory use only
Date received (yyyy-mm-dd):
PHOL No.:

ALL Sections of this form must be completed at every visit

1 - Submitter Lab Number (if applicable):

Ordering Clinician (required)
Surname, First Name:
OHIP/CPSO/Prof. License No:
Name of clinic/ facility/health unit:
Address:
Postal code:
Phone:
Fax:

cc Hospital Lab (for entry into LIS)
Hospital Name:
Address (if different from ordering clinician):
Postal Code:
Phone:
Fax:

cc Other Authorized Health Care Provider:
Surname, First name:
OHIP/CPSO/Prof. License No.:
Name of clinic/ facility/health unit:
Address:
Postal code:
Phone:
Fax:

2 - Patient Information

Health Card No.:
Medical Record No.:
Last Name:
First Name:
Date of Birth (yyyy-mm-dd):
Sex: M F
Address:
Postal Code:
Patient Phone No.:
Investigation or Outbreak No.:

3 - Travel History

Travel to:
Date of Travel (yyyy-mm-dd):
Date of Return (yyyy-mm-dd):

4 - Exposure History

Exposure to probable, or confirmed case? Yes No
Exposure details:
Date of symptom onset of contact (yyyy-mm-dd):

5 - Test(s) Requested

COVID-19 Virus
Respiratory Viruses
COVID-19 Virus AND Respiratory Viruses

6 - Specimen Type (check all that apply)

Specimen Collection Date (yyyy-mm-dd): (required)

NPS
Throat Swab
Saliva (Swish & Gargle)
Deep or Mid-turbinate Nasal Swab
Throat + Nasal
Saliva (Neat)
BAL
Anterior Nasal (Nose)
Oral (Buccal) + Deep Nasal
Other (Specify):

7 - Patient Setting / Type

Assessment Centre
Family doctor / clinic
Outpatient / ER not admitted

Only if applicable, indicate the group:

ER - to be hospitalized
Deceased / Autopsy
Healthcare worker
Institution / all group living settings
Facility Name:
Inpatient (Hospitalized)
Inpatient (ICU / CCU)
Confirmation (for use ONLY by a COVID testing lab). Enter your result (NEG / POS / or IND):
Remote Community
Unhoused / Shelter
Other (Specify):

8 - COVID-19 Vaccination Status

Received all required doses >14 days ago
Unimmunized / partial series / ≤14 days after final dose
Unknown

9 - Clinical Information

Asymptomatic
Fever
Pregnant
Symptomatic
Pneumonia
Other (Specify):
Date of symptom onset (yyyy-mm-dd):
Cough
Sore Throat

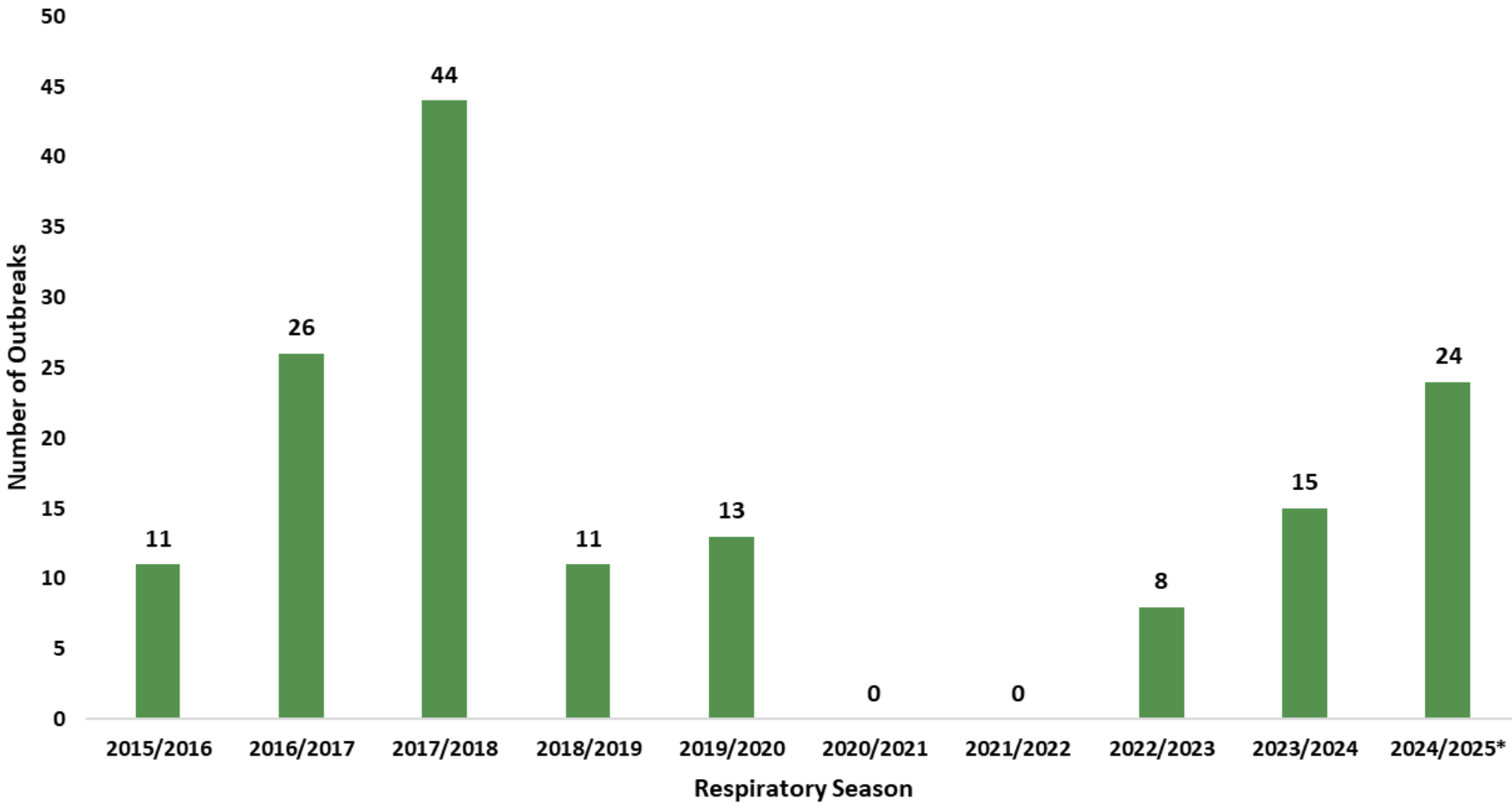
CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED

The personal health information is collected under the authority of the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, 2004, s.36 (1)(c)(iii) for the purposes specified in the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act*, 2007, s.1 including clinical laboratory testing and public health purposes. If you have questions about the collection of this personal health information please contact the PHO's Laboratory Customer Service at 416-235-6556 or toll free 1-877-604-4567. F-SD-SCG-4000 version 006.1 (August 2024).

Ontario

Halton REGION

Influenza Outbreaks



LTC and RH COVID-19 and Influenza Outbreak Preparedness Checklist

General Preparations

- ☐ Influenza Preparedness P&P
- ☐ Staff Exclusion P&P
- ☐ Initiate, well in advance, a comprehensive immunization campaign for staff, residents and families
- ☐ Have adequate supply of NPS specimen collection kits that are not expired
- ☐ Provide training to all nursing staff on all shifts on the use and location of outbreak resources
- ☐ Confirm nursing staff on all shifts have access to the list of staff and residents who have received an influenza vaccine
- ☐ Place vaccine orders with Halton Public Health when they become available

Vaccine/Antivirals Plan for Residents

- ☐ Document consents/refusals of resident vaccination
- ☐ Provide education
- ☐ Document if a resident consents to antiviral (Tamiflu) if recommended by the Medical Officer of Health during an influenza outbreak
- ☐ Keep creatinine levels on file for residents with known renal compromise in case antivirals are needed (test new admissions on entry)
- ☐ Obtain **pre-arranged** physician antiviral orders for resident prophylaxis and treatment doses in case of an influenza outbreak
- ☐ Most Responsible Physician (MRP) to be made aware of positive COVID-19 and Influenza test results to assess antiviral eligibility
- ☐ Ensure MRP can be reached rapidly for an assessment in the event of an outbreak, including weekends and holidays
- ☐ Have an arrangement with a local pharmacy and/or assigned pharmacy to obtain antiviral medications as quickly as possible, including on weekends and holidays

Vaccine Plan for ALL Staff

- ☐ Document Influenza vaccination status for staff
- ☐ Obtain doctor's declaration form for staff medically contraindicated for influenza vaccine
- ☐ Staff will be directed to start Tamiflu **IF** there is a confirmed Influenza outbreak, **and** they are **NOT** vaccinated (or were vaccinated less than 14 days previous)

No Immunization + No Tamiflu = not working

- ☐ Documentation that staff are aware of staff exclusion policy during confirmed influenza outbreak
- ☐ Recommend un-immunized staff to get pre-authorized prescriptions for Tamiflu in case of an outbreak. Letters to physicians can be provided

Antivirals

Pre-arranged antiviral orders

Creatinine levels

Arrangement with local pharmacy

No Immunization + No Tamiflu= Not Working

Influenza Preparedness

Residents with independent physicians

Early discussion

Staff antivirals from pharmacies

Respiratory Virus Tools

Halton Virus Activity Dashboard

Public Health Ontario-
Respiratory Virus Tool

Available year round

Reporting Cases/Outbreak

Symptomatic? Isolate and Test

2 or more residents with symptoms, report to Halton Congregate OB Team

OB measures can be implemented while awaiting test results

Critical in Influenza outbreaks- First 48 hours

Business hours: 905-825-6000 ext. 7341 or PublicHealthOM@halton.ca

After hours: 905-825-6000 ext. 0 or 311

Holiday Gatherings

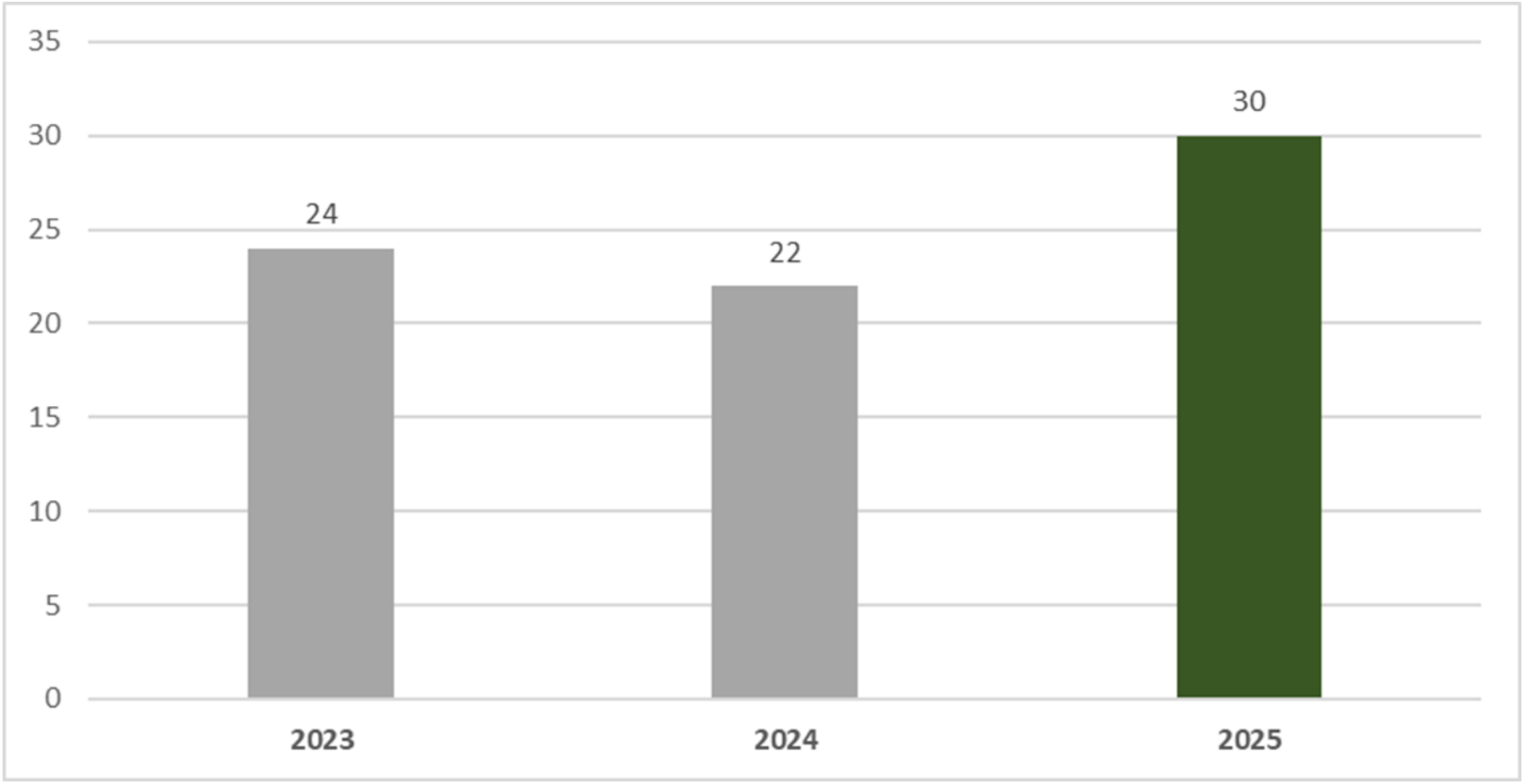
- Celebrate safely
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Cohorting
- Social distancing
- Universal masking
- Gatherings during outbreaks
- Passive/Active screening

2025 ENTERIC OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS

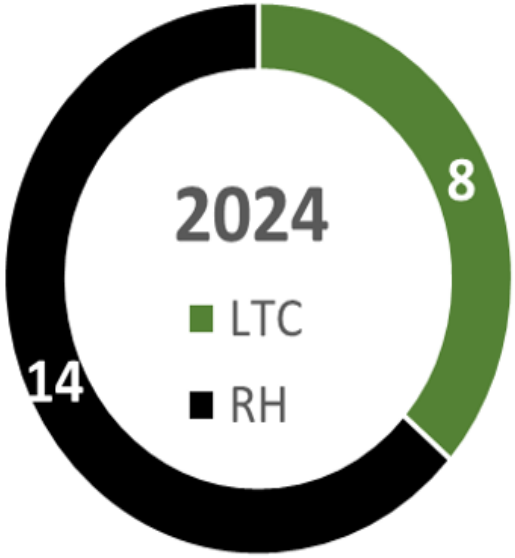
Halton REGION

Total Enteric Outbreaks in LTC/RH

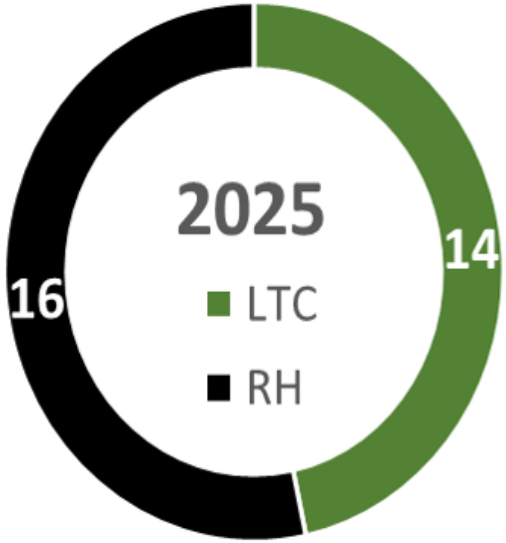
(as of Aug 31, 2025)



Enteric Outbreaks (LTC/RH) in Halton 2024 vs. 2025



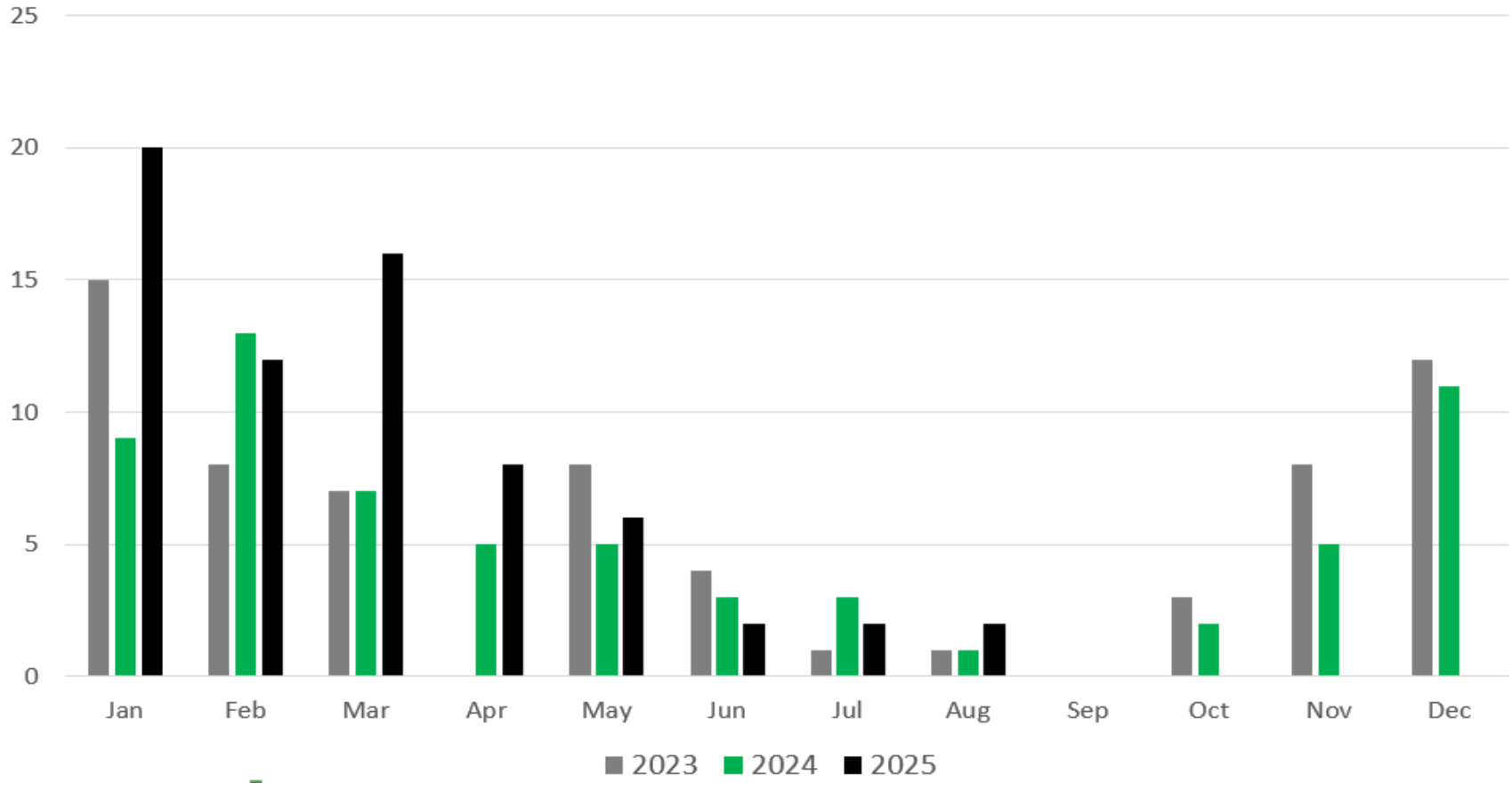
- Agents identified:
  - Norovirus = 14
  - Unknown = 8



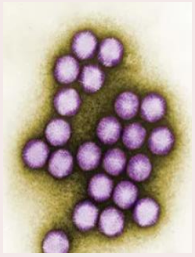
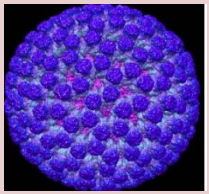
- Agents identified:
  - Norovirus = 19
  - Rotavirus = 1
  - Unknown = 10

Total Enteric Outbreaks in Halton 2023-2025

(as of Aug 31)



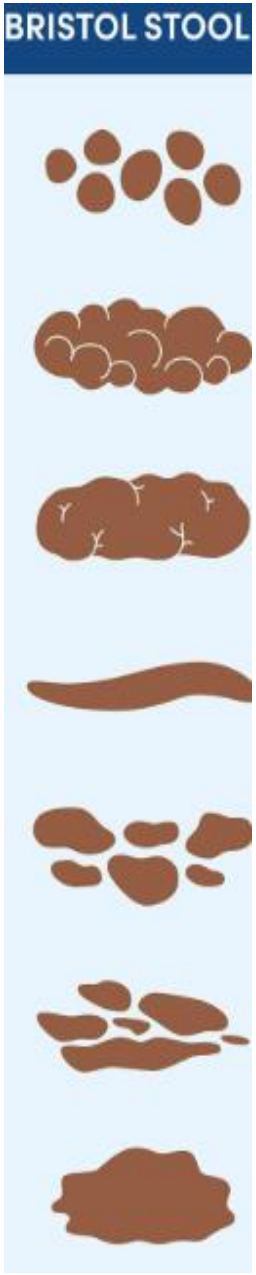
Viral Enteric Agents

Agent	Incubation Period	Isolation Criteria	Approximate Length of Illness	Declaring OB Over
Norovirus 	24-48 hours	48 hours symptom free	48 hours or more	5 consecutive days
Adenovirus 	3-10 days	48 hours symptom free	Up to 10 days	*Adenovirus & Rotavirus have a longer infectious period (IP)
Rotavirus 	Approximately 2 days	48 hours symptom free	Up to 10 days	*Adenovirus & Rotavirus have a longer infectious period (IP)

***Consultation required for declaring OB over**

Outbreak Definition

- **Two individuals (resident and/or staff)** meeting case definition
- **Case definition**
  - Staff or resident with 2 or more **unexpected** episodes of diarrhea and/or vomiting within 24 hours
- **Resolved date**
  - Case is 48 hours symptom free



Enteric Line List

- Fillable PDF can be used by staff and emailed to the assigned PHI daily
- Only list ill residents who meet case definition.
- Complete a separate list for residents and staff.
- If unsure, consult with PHI.

Halton REGION

ENTERIC OUTBREAK LINE LISTING: LONG-TERM CARE/ RETIREMENT HOMES

Outbreak No. 2236 /_____/_____ **Resident List** ☐ **OR** **Staff List** ☐

Name of Facility: _____ **Address:** _____

Date: _____ **Attn. Halton Region Contact Person:** _____

Contact person at centre: _____ **Phone: (905)825-6000 Ext.** _____ **Fax: (905)825-1009**

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **Email:** _____

Case definition: **A resident or staff member of the facility, presenting 2 or more unexpected episodes of diarrhoea and/or vomiting within 24 hour time period, with or without fever.**

First and last initials Please list all resident and staff cases that meet case definition.		**Location** Please indicate floor/unit name for each case	**Date** (YY/MM/DD)		**Symptoms**					**Specimen Collected**	**Specimen (+/-)**	**Comments:** e.g. hospitalization, death, repeat case, family ill, etc.
			Onset	**Resolved**	**Diarrhoea**	**Vomiting**	**Nausea**	**Fever**	**Other** (specify)			
1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
6.												
7.												
8.												
9.												
10.												

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Enteric Sample Collection Tips

I. Public Health will provide the sample requisition and vials

I. Public Health will advise which vial to use based on OB assessment.

I. Do not send enteric outbreak samples to your private lab as these must go to the PHOL.

Public Health enteric sample collection vials may look different compared to your home's private lab (i.e. LifeLabs, Dynacare, etc.)

Enteric samples collected during an outbreak **MUST** be picked up by Halton Region Public Health.

Call your assigned PHI if unsure or have questions

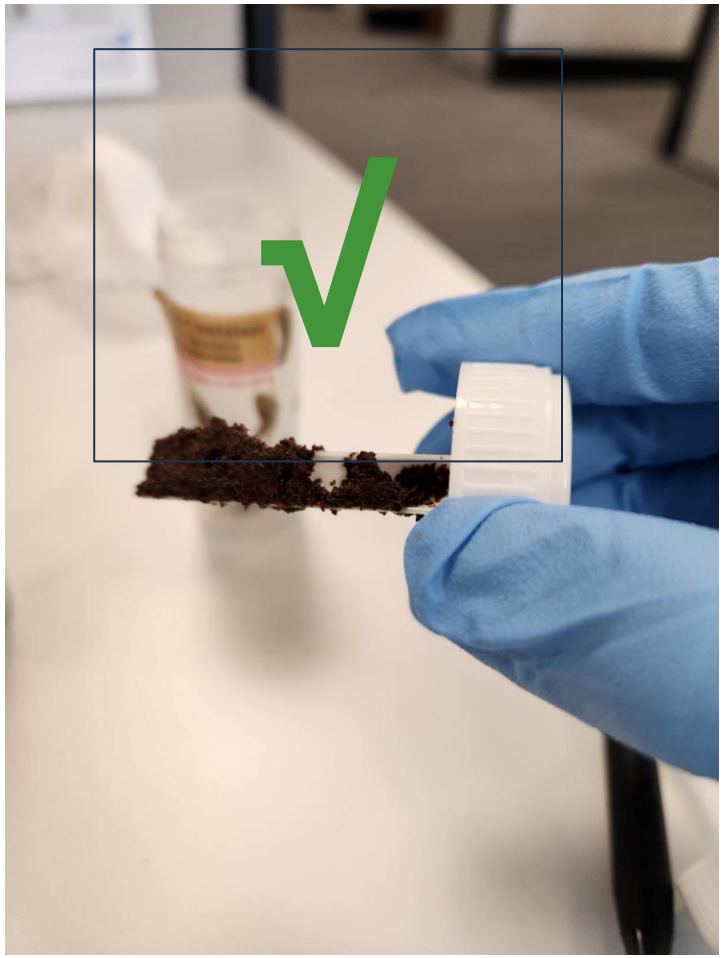
Specimen Submission Activity

Why did the stool specimen get rejected?

PPE for staff?

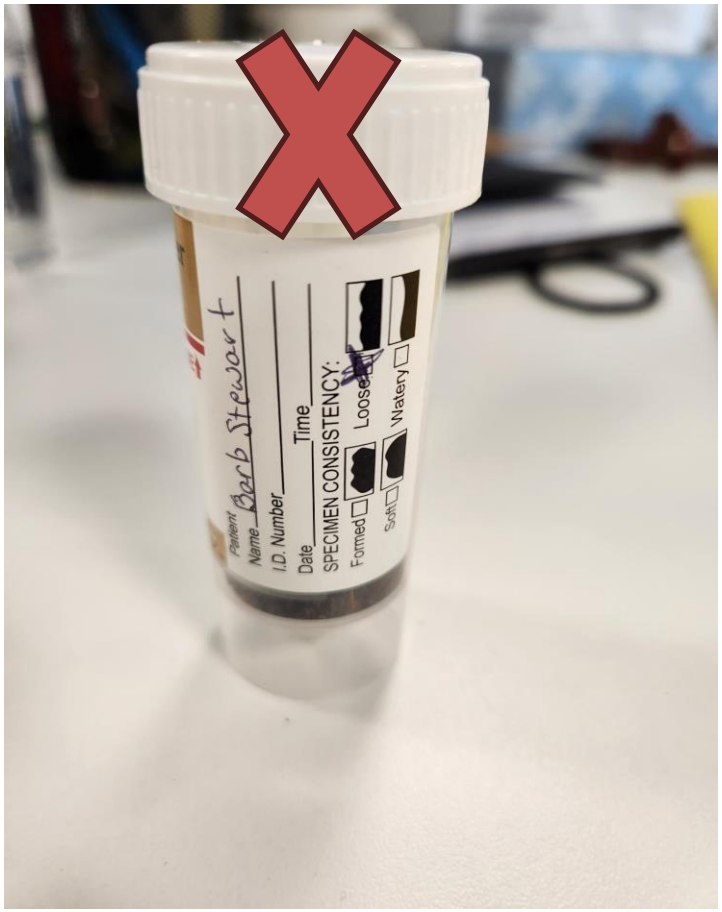
How much of the specimen do I really need to collect?

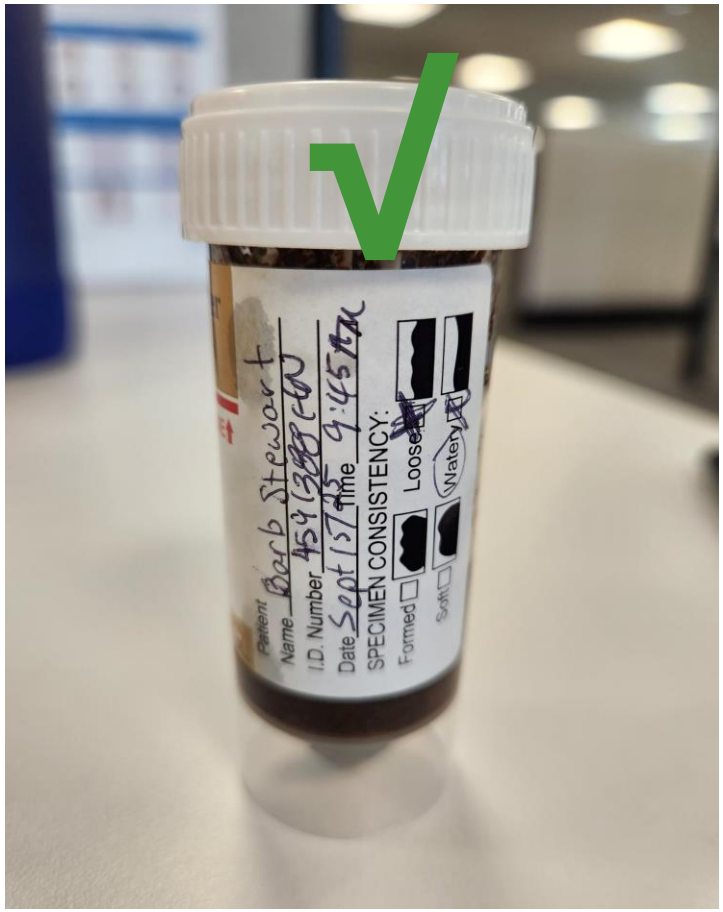
Specimen Submission



Specimen Submission

Specimen Submission

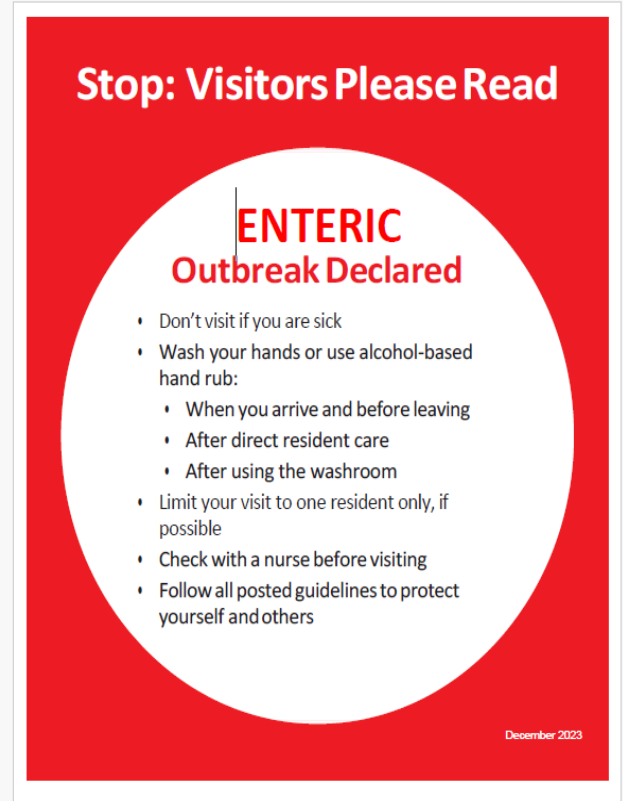




PPE for Staff

- Staff to do a **POINT OF CARE RISK ASSESSMENT** to determine the type of PPE to wear
- Gloves
- Facial protection
- Gown
- Ensure staff are trained on hand hygiene

Looking forward to Thanksgiving or Christmas events?



Social activities in all affected areas in outbreak should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak

Consider postponing outside agency visits (non-essential) and events until outbreak is over

Do not rent out community rooms during outbreak

Enteric Outbreak Review

Let's check our knowledge	Best Answer
During an enteric Outbreak, a case can be taken out of isolation after they are 48 hours symptom free.	True
Staff can send the stool specimen via the home's private lab.	False
Staff should receive IPAC training onsite, which includes hand hygiene and environmental cleaning procedures	True
Staff in charge of updating the line listing, can send updates once a week to the Public Health Inspector assigned to the OB.	False
Contact AND droplet precautions are needed, when there is a risk of being exposed to body fluids.	True

References

Ministry of Health (September 2024). *Infectious disease protocol Appendix 1: Case definitions and disease specific information; Respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions and public hospitals* https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-11/moh-ophs-respiratory-infection-outbreaks-en-2024-11-01.pdf

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Public Health Ontario (September 2025). *Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool.* https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Infectious-Disease/Respiratory-Virus-Tool

Thank you.

Questions?

Halton REGION