



Outbreak Control Measures Stool Sampling & Food Sampling

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has some reminders and recommendations to ensure optimal management of an enteric outbreak.

Stool Sampling

During an enteric outbreak (increase in diarrheal illnesses) the Health Unit can facilitate the submission and testing of stool specimens.

Specimens are tested to identify any bacterial, viral or parasitic agents that may be responsible for the illnesses at your centre. Identification of an agent is beneficial for determining appropriate exclusion and isolation periods, disinfectants and other critical outbreak control measures

The Health Unit will provide you with enteric outbreak kits. Each kit is labelled with an expiry date. **Do not use expired kits.** If you require new kits, please call the Communicable Diseases Team at Ext. 8809.

Labeling of Stool Specimens

The Public Health Laboratory **will not test** the specimens unless the main label located on the outside of the biohazard bag and each specimen vial is appropriately labelled.

The following information **must** be provided on the main kit label **and** on each specimen vial:

- Name of child or staff
- Date collected
- Outbreak number (e.g. 2260-2009-###)

Once the specimen has been collected, refrigerate it immediately. Do not freeze specimen.

Notify the health unit as soon as possible to arrange for pick-up and delivery to the public health laboratory.

Communication of Stool Specimens

When the health unit is notified that a specimen is ready for pick-up we will require **verbal confirmation** that the parent/guardian of the child is aware and supportive of the collection, submission and analysis of the specimen. The onus will be on the child care centre to determine how this notification and approval is obtained (verbal, written, consent form). You may provide parents with the outbreak kits and health unit contact information and the specimens can be picked up from the parents directly.

The results will be communicated to the centre's supervisor who is responsible for notifying the parents. However, if any reportable diseases are noted (e.g. *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157), the health unit will need to contact the parents for further follow-up.

Food Sampling

The Health Unit is asking that a sample (portion size) of all hazardous items be kept in the fridge for 72 hours following the meal. For example, ground beef used for tacos on a Tuesday lunch should be kept in the fridge until Friday lunch. In the event of an outbreak, the food can be sent for analysis to determine if it is involved in the outbreak.

Thank you for your continued efforts towards optimal health and safety of the children you care for. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your health inspector for more information.

Call the Communicable Disease Team ext. 8809



Tel: 721-7520
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

Your Health Connection