

Steps for Early Identification of Outbreaks

1. Conduct Surveillance

- Conduct ongoing surveillance for infections in residents and staff and follow routine practices for infection control.
- Conduct targeted surveillance for respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms in residents and staff.
- Identify respiratory symptoms such as: runny nose/ stuffy nose, sneezing, dry cough, congestion, sore throat, hoarseness, difficulty swallowing, fever or abnormal temperature, breathing difficulty, loss of appetite, malaise or muscle pain.
- Identify gastrointestinal symptoms : 2 or more unexpected incidents of diarrhea and/ or vomiting within 24 hours.

2. Suspect an Outbreak

Respiratory

- Two cases of Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) occurring within 48 hours in a geographic area (e.g. unit, floor)
- OR
- More than one unit having a case of ARI within 48 hours
- OR
- One laboratory-confirmed case of influenza

Enteric

- Two suspected cases of infectious gastroenteritis in a specific area, such as a home, unit, or floor within 48 hours
- or
- When more than one unit has a case of gastrointestinal illness within 24 hours.

Contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) early about any suspected outbreak.

3. Initiate Action for Outbreak Management

- Implement Infection Control Measures: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions.
- Notify SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext 8809. On weekends, after hours (4:30 p.m. - 8:30 a.m. Monday to Friday) and holidays please contact the communicable disease on-call investigator at 1-888-225-7851.
- Initiate two separate line lists, one for residents and one for staff.
- Fax the line listing daily to the SMDHU at 705-733-7738.
- Follow SMDHU directions to obtain specimens for laboratory testing (NP swabs for respiratory symptoms, stool samples for gastrointestinal symptoms).
- Implement the SMDHU Recommendations of Outbreak Control Measures. Maintain daily contact with the SMDHU to review additional cases.