



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# Diarrhoea and Vomiting in schools

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# Introduction

- Diarrhoea has numerous causes but diarrhoea caused by an infection in the gut can be easily passed to others

## Symptoms

Diarrhoea is defined as 3 or more liquid or semi-liquid stools in a 24 hour period.

## Spread

- Contaminated hands or objects are put in the mouth or after eating contaminated food or drinks.
- Vomit

A person will be infectious whilst symptoms remain

# Common sites for transmission

. Children are particularly susceptible because:

- they have immature immune systems
- have close contact with other children
- sometimes have no or incomplete vaccinations
- have a poor understanding of hygiene practices

# Classification of an outbreak

- 10% of the school roll are symptomatic
- 2 or more linked cases in staff/students
- Headteachers and Managers should Inform their local [UKHSA health protection team](#) if there are a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to diarrhoea and vomiting. To discuss the outbreak situation and agree if any actions are needed.

# The information the Health Protection Team will gather

1. What are the symptoms?
2. Numbers affected (staff and children)
3. Total numbers of children and staff in the school
4. Date(s) when symptoms started
5. Any other illness circulating in school?
6. What area of the school is involved
7. If contained in a class/nursery/reception – how many children in class?
8. School lunches or packed lunches? – any changes to the school menu
9. Any snacks given? Handled by children?
10. Is the school aware of any parties outside of school?
11. Any pets in class?
12. Handwashing facilities? Encouraged to wash hands before eating and after playtime?
13. Anyone vomited in classroom?

# Infection prevention and control – Hand hygiene



Handwashing after using the toilet, between nappy changes, before eating or handling food, after playtime and after touching animals.

Remember alcohol hand gel is not effective against norovirus.

# Infection prevention and control

- Cleaning/disinfection (hypochlorite 0.1% solution)
- Spillage cleaning for bodily fluids.
- No cooking/baking, removal of playdoh, sand and water play.

# Exclusion

- Exclude until 48 hours after last episode of symptoms
- There should be a local policy for exclusion of staff and children while they are infectious and a procedure for contacting parents or carers when children become ill at school.



# What to do if symptoms start in school

- Isolate
- Dedicated toilet
- Environmental cleaning – high contact items
- Sending home
- Siblings if asymptomatic can remain in school
- Contact the health protection team for further advice and guidance

# Video showing how vomit spreads



# Useful resources

- [Diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak education and childcare settings action checklist \(1\).docx](#)
- [Chapter 2: infection prevention and control - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Training resources

<https://www.e-bug.eu/>

- <https://e-bug.eu/eng/KS1/lesson/Hand-Hygiene>

[https://e-bug.eu/junior\\_pack.aspx?cc=eng&s](https://e-bug.eu/junior_pack.aspx?cc=eng&s)

- [s=2&t=Hand Hygiene](https://e-bug.eu/junior_pack.aspx?cc=eng&s=2&t=Hand%20Hygiene)

Thank you for listening!

Any questions?