



<b>Title</b>	Gastrointestinal illness: Staff guidelines
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# GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS: STAFF GUIDELINE

**These guidelines are for staff, who have an acute gastrointestinal illness, with a suspected or known infective cause**

**Aim:** Ensure that staff minimise the spread of infection by following the correct procedure for gastrointestinal illness

## Standards

Staff with gastrointestinal illness are expected to comply with the following:

1. Staff must inform a member of the Occupational Health Service (OHS) that they are unwell with gastrointestinal symptoms. This includes staff returning from annual leave or any other leave of absence. If they are unsure of the cause, staff should still consult with the OHS.

Type and duration of symptoms will vary but some or all of the following may be experienced:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain

2. OHS staff will inform the member of staff if a stool specimen should be submitted and give further guidance as required. If a stool specimen is submitted, the location source should be marked 'OHS' on the specimen request form.
3. OHS staff will liaise with a member of the Infection Prevention Control Team if staff with gastrointestinal symptoms are working in an area where there is a known or suspected outbreak of infection.
4. OHS will notify the IPCT if there is an increased incidence of reported GI illness amongst staff, in particular if they are related to a specific area.
5. During a declared outbreak, OHS will provide the IPCT/ OCT with a weekly summary of staff numbers with GI illness (See [Healthcare Infection Incidents, Outbreak & Data Exceedance Policy](#)).
6. To preserve confidentiality, the IPCT will not be informed of staff names.

7. Staff must not return to work until 48 hours clear of all gastrointestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain or nausea. The reason is that staff may continue to excrete the causative virus/bacteria within this 48 hour period. Symptomatic absence on SSTS is recorded as sickness; the next 48 hours is exclusion providing the staff member has contacted the OHS.
8. Good hygiene practice, especially hand hygiene, is of the utmost importance to prevent the spread to other persons.
9. If another member of the family/household is affected they are advised to contact their own GP or the OHS if concerned.

**Catering staff must follow their own departmental guidance concerning gastrointestinal illness.**