

# 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, coughs, 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 diarrhoea and/ or vomiting within 24 hours.

## 2. Suspect an Outbreak

### Respiratory

- When one case is laboratory confirmed for influenza, suspect an influenza outbreak.
- When there are two cases of acute respiratory tract illness detected within 48 hours in one geographic area.
- or
- When more than one unit has a case of acute respiratory illness within 48 hours.

### Gastrointestinal

- When there are two cases of gastrointestinal illness detected within 24 hours in one geographic area.
  - or
  - When more than one unit has a case of gastrointestinal illness within 24 hours.
- Contact the Public Health Department early about any suspected outbreak.

## 3. Initiate Action for Outbreak Management

- Implement Infection Control Measures-Routine Practices and Transmission- Based Precautions.
- Notify Public Health Department at Tel: 905 825 6000. ext 7341. On weekends call 905 825 6000, press "0", notify the operator you would like to report a suspected outbreak, the "On Call investigator" will be paged for you.
- Initiate two separate line lists, one for residents and one for staff.
- Fax the line listing daily to the Health Department at Fax: 905 825 8797.
- Follow Public Health directions to obtain specimens for laboratory testing (NP swabs for respiratory symptoms, stool samples for gastrointestinal symptoms).
- Implement the Health Department's Recommendations of Outbreak Control Measures. Maintain daily contact with the Health Department to review additional cases.