

OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION FORM

STEPS OF AN INVESTIGATION

1. Verify the diagnosis; identify the agent.

Describe the initial magnitude of the problem and what symptoms got the facility's attention.
What diagnosis has been established?
What agent (bacterial, viral, other) has been identified?
Develop a case definition (specific criteria for a case). Example: All residents who have had 3 or more loose stools in the last 24 hours.
CASE DEFINITION:

2. Confirm that an outbreak exists.

Use your case definition to find all cases.			
Based on your knowledge in #1, are the numbers of cases above what is endemic (usually seen) in the facility? If yes, consider that an outbreak exists.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Total number of cases so far:		DATE:	
Do you have an outbreak? If yes, proceed.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

3. Search for additional cases.

Encourage immediate reporting of cases (laboratory, physicians, personnel).
 Search for other cases by retrospective record review, lab reports, etc.

Total number of cases:		DATE:	
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4. Characterize the cases by person, place, time.

Person: (Resident characteristics - age, sex, disease, exposures, treatments)
Place: (Consider ward, hall, room, outside exposures. May use facility maps.)
Time: What is the period of the outbreak? What is the probable source of exposure?
Record dates of onset and draw an epidemic curve.

5. Form a tentative hypothesis (best guess at the time).

Review data to determine common host factors and exposures. Develop a best guess on the:

Reservoir	
Source	
Mode Of Transmission	

6. Institute preliminary control measures.

Initiate control measures based on what you know. (Hand hygiene, isolation, cohorting, etc.) Determine if you need outside assistance.

Control measures			
Date implemented			
Assistance needed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

7. Test the hypothesis.

Many long term care facility problems never reach this stage. It may end without intervention or simple control measures may cause the problem to cease. Special epidemiologic studies may be needed and we may need to seek help.

8. Refine the control measures.

Add additional control measures if needed.

Control Measure	Date Added

9. Monitor and evaluate the control measures.

Are control measures being used appropriately? If no, insure compliance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Evaluate control measures. Did cases cease? If no, consider additional actions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

10. Prepare and disseminate a final report.

This form in a completed state may serve as the final report. Make the report as detailed as possible.

Date of final report:	
Reported to:	
Reported by:	