

What is an Outbreak?

An outbreak is an increase in the number of patients ill with a particular infection and that have been in hospital for a period of time, on the same unit.

Outbreaks sometimes occur in hospitals due to:

- The large number of people who come and go
- The ease of which illness can spread from one person to another
- The fact that many patients have underlying conditions that make them more susceptible to illness
- The large number of people seeking care for respiratory or gastro-intestinal illnesses

Outbreaks can be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites and can last from a few days to weeks or even longer depending on the cause of the outbreak.

During an outbreak it is important that all persons entering the outbreak unit follow all measures in place in order to protect themselves, patients, and healthcare workers.

The safety of our patients is our leading concern.

What special precautions are required during an outbreak?

Limiting visitors can decrease the chance of passing infections on to visitors, health care providers and other patients. Please try to postpone visiting while the hospital is in an outbreak.

If you must visit:

- Visitors are limited to 2 per patient, with the exception of palliative patients
- Visitors may be asked to sign in at the nurses station upon arrival
- Visitors may be asked about signs and symptoms of infection while signing in
- Visitors must follow all of the same infection control measures as hospital staff and may be asked to leave if they don't
- Visit one patient only and exit the facility immediately after the visit
- Children under 14 may be excluded from visiting during an outbreak

Palliative patients will have no visitor restrictions during an outbreak, but all visitors are expected to follow the posted prevention measures.

The hospital has specific policies to follow during an outbreak. The purpose of such policies is to prevent the spread of the illness in our patients, staff and visitors.

Daily changes to outbreak measures may occur due to new information becoming available.

WRH is committed to doing everything possible to contain the outbreak.

Clean Hands are Important for Good Health

When to clean your hands:

- Immediately upon entering and leaving the facility
- Upon entering the patient's room
- Before providing direct care or touching the patient
- After providing direct care or touching the patient
- After leaving the patient's room
- After personal functions like blowing your nose, or using the washroom

