

TENFOLD JUMP IN NOROVIRUS OUTBREAKS

- Last month, 64 Early Learning Service (ELS) staff and 280 attendees became unwell due to norovirus.
- There has been a tenfold increase in norovirus in Auckland Early Learning Services (ELs) this year compared to last.
- It is thought this may be related to a change in the cleaning products ELS' are using (ammonia-based rather than chlorine bleach).

Auckland norovirus outbreaks Last month (November), 21 of the 29 norovirus outbreaks Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) responded to were in Early Learning Services (ELs). During the same period last year, just two of nine outbreaks were in Early Learning Services.

Ammonia-based cleaning products, possible cause ARPHS has identified that some centres affected by outbreaks have been cleaning with ammonia-based products as these are marketed as inactivating COVID-19. Ammonia and alcohol-based solutions **do not** completely inactivate norovirus. It is important that hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) is used regularly and thoroughly for all cleaning.

ARPHS has communicated with all Auckland region Early Learning Services with advice on norovirus symptoms, cleaning, hand hygiene and the importance of keeping sick children at home. A media release is also being issued today, and ARPHS will post information to its social media accounts.

Recommended actions If you see patients in your practice with suspected norovirus, please advise that they:

- Remain at home until at least 48 hours after their symptoms, or their child's, have stopped.
- Clean surfaces at home such as bathrooms and toilets regularly, using a chlorine bleach product.
- Maintain good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of the virus, especially after changing nappies, handling soiled clothing, or before eating.

Lower rates in Aged Residential Care The incidence of norovirus in Aged Residential Care facilities has reduced, from six facilities last year to one this year.

For more information:

- <https://www.arphs.health.nz/public-health-topics/disease-and-illness/norovirus/>
- <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/norovirus-vomiting-and-diarrhoea-bugs>
- <https://aucklandregion.communityhealthpathways.org/12652.htm>
- <https://aucklandregion.communityhealthpathways.org/87344.htm>
- <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/guidelines-management-norovirus-outbreaks-hospitals-and-elderly-care-institutions>

YOUR HEALTH SUMMARY – CONTINUITY OF CARE OVER CHRISTMAS BREAK

Leading up to the holiday period, [Your Health Summary](#) (real-time safe and secure summary of a patient's care record) will provide an essential service ensuring the continuity of patient care for practices that are reducing hours over the Christmas/New Year break. We urgently ask your practice to participate in Your Health Summary as a vital part of your COVID-19 pandemic and holiday season preparedness.

A significant level of participation is required to ensure this solution works for all – currently 120 Auckland practices are on board. To participate, download your agreement form, sign and return to contact@yourhealthsummary.org.nz so we can set up your practice in time for your practice's holiday period. To find out more, please visit [Your Health Summary website](#) or email contact@yourhealthsummary.org.nz.

Experience by practices utilising similar systems in the Capital and Coast and Canterbury regions during holiday periods reveals that access to summary records reduced the volume of queries back to the patient's usual general practice. This means practice staff were less likely to be interrupted by requests for patient information during the holiday break.

For more information visit Auckland Regional HealthPathways: [Your Health Summary](#).

GP NZ PANUI 26 NOVEMBER 2020

GP NZ, the General Practice Advocacy and Support organisation that Auckland PHO belongs to have published their fortnightly newsletter. Please see attachment (1).

THE GOODFELLOW SYMPOSIUM 2021 LIVE ONLINE EVENT

The Goodfellow Unit's annual two-day symposium, held in partnership with the College, is set to go ahead next March. However, in response to COVID-19 it will be held virtually. The programme will still be packed with a variety of rich and varied presentations, including those from College President Dr Sam Murton and Medical Director Dr Bryan Betty.

Date: 27 - 28 March 2021

Early bird registration is open. For more information regarding the programme and registration, please visit <https://www.goodfellowunit.org/symposium/program>



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