



Hospital and Health Service Infectious Disease of Significance or Outbreak Management Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

An infectious disease of significance or an outbreak requires prompt attention and advance planning.

The responsibility for outbreak investigation and management will vary according to the outbreak type and circumstances. Recognising that good governance is essential to support outbreak management, assigning roles and responsibilities for our local context is the focus of this procedure.

It is important to note that outbreaks in the Great Southern can:

- be detected in varied ways
- occur in health care settings or in the community or in both
- be related to notifiable or non-notifiable infectious agents.

Timely identification and notification of any suspected case of a notifiable infectious disease with prompt implementation of appropriate disease management, transmission precautions and contact follow up protocols will reduce the risk of further transmission and outbreak.

2. Procedure

Outbreak response overview

The outbreak response may differ according to the nature of disease, the virulence of the organism and the vulnerability of the patients concerned, however the principles that underlie an outbreak investigation are similar.

The following steps are outlined in detail in the

[Australian Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2010](#)

Note that the steps are often carried out simultaneously, not sequentially.

- Step 1Recognise outbreak and prepare to investigate
- Step 2Verify the diagnosis and confirm that an outbreak exists
- Step 3Establish case definition and find cases
- Step 4Characterise outbreak by person, place and time
- Step 5Determine who is at risk
- Step 6Develop hypothesis – the “how” and “why”
- Step 7Test hypothesis with established facts
- Step 8Carry out further studies if necessary
- Step 9Implement ongoing control / prevention measures
- Step 10Communicate findings

Key resources in case of an outbreak

In the event of an outbreak in a **health care setting**, the [Australian Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2010](#) are to be referred to for guidance.

For outbreaks of notifiable infections, the key resource is the Australian Series of National Guidelines for that particular infection

[Department of Health | Series of National Guidelines \(SoNGs\).](#)

[Appendix A - Health Service Disease Outbreak Case Listing form](#)

[Appendix B - Outbreak Response Team Agenda template](#)

Procedure

When a patient is suspected of having a communicable disease, the treating clinician will:

- Take appropriate transmission precautions
[Australian Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2010](#) pages 165 to 178: Type and duration of precautions for specific infections and conditions
- Order appropriate pathology, consider requesting urgent results
- Notification required:
 - Infection Control via gs.infectioncontrol@health.wa.gov.au or telephone 98922211
 - Albany Health Campus - notify Nurse Manager via extension 8224
 - Regional sites – notify site Director of Nursing or Clinical Nurse Manager
- For advice after hours; contact Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) **Duty Officer** on 9328 0553, or an infectious diseases physician at a Perth tertiary Hospital

3. Roles and Responsibilities

An infectious disease of significance or outbreak could occur in the community, the hospital setting or both. The Infection Prevention and Control team (hospital setting) is responsible for the response within a hospital; for patients and staff. The Public Health team is responsible for the community response, and for any Hospital Emergency Department patients or inpatients that have been discharged to the community. The public health team will provide advice and support to infection control regarding the hospital response to notifiable infectious diseases.

Outbreak Response Team (ORT)

This will vary depending on the issue arising. An Outbreak Response Team for an outbreak in the Healthcare Setting would include:

- Regional Director of Nursing and Midwifery (Chairperson)
- Clinical Nurse Manager for area affected by outbreak
- Clinical Nurse Specialist - Infection Prevention and Control
- Director of Medical Services Albany Health Campus/Medical Representative
- Public Health Representative

The committee reserves the right to co-opt if necessary if the outbreak escalates, the:

- Regional Medical Director
- Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator
- Regional Pharmacist
- Medical Scientist, PathWest
- Clinical Nurse Manager Communicable Disease Control and or Public Health Physician
- Operations Manager
- Regional Manager, Public and Primary Care.

Clinical Nurse Specialist - Infection Prevention and Control

- Leads outbreak response within healthcare settings in the Great Southern
- Seeks support from members of the ORT above, Path West microbiologist on call, infectious disease physicians, public health, CDCD and other experts as required
- Coordinates the formation of the Outbreak Response Team (ORT)
- Improves collaboration and partnership among stakeholders
- Promotes comprehensive surveillance
- Evaluates Outbreak Plan and provides a summary of outbreak to the Regional Infection Prevention and Control Committee
- If notifiable disease, provide summary of outbreak to GS Public Health Unit

Outbreak response team (ORT)

- Once an outbreak is declared, the ORT should meet daily or as agreed to develop, implement and monitor the Outbreak Plan
- All meetings and decisions of the ORT should be documented
- The ORT works to ensure rapid, coordinated response to an identified outbreak with an emphasis on optimising the role of laboratory services
- Ward closures and any response actions with budgetary, staffing or public implications need to be ratified by the ORT

4. Compliance

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Employment Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (HSA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

5. Evaluation

Following each outbreak within the hospital setting in the Great Southern, the final meeting of the ORT will include debriefing and evaluation. Final outbreak summary tabled at Regional Infection Prevention and Control Committee.

6. Records Management

Minutes from Outbreak Response Team meetings, Case Listing forms and Final Outbreak Summaries from Hospital and Health Service outbreaks are to be stored as per WACHS corporate records in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System. [Records Management Policy](#)

7. Standards

Standard 3 Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections
[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) (Second edition 2017) - 3.6, 3.7

8. Legislation

Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cwlth)
Contaminated Site Act 2003
Emergency Management Act 2005
Food Act 2008
Public Health Act 2016
Health Professionals (Special Events Exemption) Act 2000
Hospitals and Health Services Act 1927
Medicines and Poisons Act 2014
National Health Security Act 2007 (Cwlth)
OHS Act 1984
Pharmacy Act 2010
Poisons Act 1964
Radiation Safety Act 1975
Tobacco Products Control Act 2006
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007

9. References

[Australian Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2010
Department of Health | Series of National Guidelines \(SoNGs\)](#)
[Case definitions of notifiable infectious diseases and related conditions WA July 2013](#)

10. Related WACHS Documents

[WACHS Infection Prevention and Control Policy](#)
[WACHS Outbreak Management Action Plan – Gastroenteritis Procedure](#)
[Community Disease Outbreak Management Procedure](#)
[Airborne Transmission Precautions](#)
[Contact Transmission Precautions](#)
[Droplet Transmission Precautions](#)
[Standard Transmission Precautions](#)

11. Related WA Health Policy Documents

Mandatory requirements for infection control include:

- [Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease \(CJD\) Risk Assessment and Management - OD 0456/13](#)
- [Healthcare Associated Infection Surveillance in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities - OD 0527/14](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control of Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae \(CRE\) in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities - OD 0399/12](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control of Influenza-Like Illness in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities - OD 0294/10](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus \(MRSA\) in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities \(HCFs\) - OD 0478/13](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control of Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities - OD 0646/16](#)
- [National Hand Hygiene Initiative in Western Australian Hospitals - OD 0429/13](#)
- [Use of Macerator Machines for the Disposal of Human Waste in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities - OD 0500/14](#)

Mandatory requirements for immunisation include:

- [Health Care Worker Immunisation Policy - OD 0388/12](#)
- [Vaccine Administration Code: Mumps Outbreak 2015-2016 - OD 0642/16](#)
- [Vaccine Cold Chain Guidelines - OD 0355/11](#)

Mandatory requirements for prevention, identification, notification and control of communicable disease outbreaks include:

- [Adoption by WA Health of 'Series of National Guidelines' \(SoNGS\) produced by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia for public health management of communicable diseases. - OD 0660/16](#)
- [Guidelines for exclusion of people with enteric infections and their contacts from work, school and child care settings - OD 0645/16](#)
- [Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities - OD 0465/13](#)
- [Public Health Follow-up of Sporadic Enteric Disease Notifications - OD 0490/14](#)
- [Viral haemorrhagic fever response plan for Western Australia. 21 July 2015](#)
- [Westplan Human Epidemic](#)

12. Policy Framework

[Public Health Policy Framework](#)

13. Appendices

[Appendix A - Health Service Disease Outbreak Case Listing form](#)

[Appendix B - Outbreak Response Team Agenda template](#)

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