

California Department of Public Health – Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory

UNEXPLAINED GASTROENTERITIS OUTBREAK SPECIMEN SUBMITTAL FORM

VRDL in collaboration with UCSF has started a project to identify etiological viral agents in unexplained outbreaks of gastroenteritis. We are requesting public health labs to send stools (if stools not available, nucleic acid extracts) from outbreaks that cannot be associated with a parasite, fungi, toxin, bacteria or Norovirus causative agent and meet the following criteria:

- Viral etiology is strongly suspected, but norovirus real time PCR negative (for all samples from the outbreak)
- There are between 4 and 10 negative stools that are available for analysis
- These stools have been collected within 72 hours of the start of symptoms.
- Stools have been stored at 4⁰C (or nucleic acid extracts stored at -70⁰C)
- Nucleic acid extracts (when stools are not available) stored at -70⁰C

Both sides of this submittal form must be completed and sent with the samples for PCR testing.

Name of institution/CITY/COUNTY: _____

Type of institution/setting (e.g. long term care facility, school, camp, restaurant, hospital, jail, cruise ship, catered event, etc): _____

Number of residents/students/population-at-risk (if appropriate): _____

Number of staff (if appropriate): _____

Date of first case: ____/____/____ Date of last case: ____/____/____

Suspected source: Food-borne Water-borne Person-to-person Imported/travel Unknown

If source identified, note any additional information available:

Total number of clinical cases: _____ Number of cases hospitalized: _____ Number of cases who died: _____

Total number of cases tested: _____ Total number of laboratory-confirmed cases: _____

Tested for bacteria? Yes No Results: _____

Tested for ova and parasites? Yes No Results: _____

Tested for norovirus? Yes No Results: _____

* Outbreaks of any disease are reportable under the Title 17, California Code of Regulations. Please communicate with your local communicable disease control unit to ensure that any norovirus outbreaks are reported to the California Department of Public Health Statistics and Surveillance Section.

Instructions for Submitting Samples

Timing

Stool specimens must be obtained during the acute phase of illness (within 48-72 hours of diarrhea onset) while the stools are still liquid or semisolid because the level of excretion is greatest then.

Number of Samples

For meaningful laboratory results (see interpretation below) specimens from a minimum of four (4) and preferably more, up to a maximum of ten (10) ill persons should be obtained during the acute phase of illness. The greater the number of stool samples submitted (up to a maximum of 10), the more meaningful the test results.

- A single stool sample will not be tested since neither a positive nor negative result will be meaningful.
- Testing of asymptomatic cases is not encouraged without prior consultation.

Storage and Transportation

Stool specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4⁰C until they can be sent to the laboratory. Samples stored at this temperature can be kept for 2-3 weeks without compromising diagnostic yield. Samples should be frozen if they cannot be shipped to the laboratory within 3 weeks. Nucleic acid extracts should be stored at -20⁰C to -70⁰C.

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Name of Facility/CITY/COUNTY:

USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH OUTBREAK

VRDL Patient Accession # (For VRDL Use Only)	Patient Name- Last, First	Sex M F	DOB	Date of Diarrhea	Date Stool Collected

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Submitter, Please Enter Your Complete Mailing Address in the Box Above

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