

# Healthcare Facilities Quick Guide

for infection control and selected pathogens

## Legionella & Water Management Programs



**Legionella** bacteria live naturally in water and can become a problem in building water systems, like those found in healthcare facilities.



The bacteria can cause a severe lung disease, called **Legionnaires' disease**. People get sick by inhaling water droplets that contain the bacteria. One in four (25%) people who get their illness in a healthcare facility will die.



The best way to prevent *Legionella* is to create and use a **water management program**.

### A water management program includes:

- Creating a team focused on keeping the facility's water safe
- Understanding the building's water system
- Taking actions to reduce the risk of *Legionella* growing and spreading in the building water system

### For more information:

Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/WMPtoolkit>

Email: [Legionella.Health@tn.gov](mailto:Legionella.Health@tn.gov)

**CMS requires that all critical access, long term care and acute care facilities have a water management program.**

## Norovirus & Outbreaks



**Norovirus** is a contagious virus that causes diarrhea and vomiting. Outbreaks of norovirus are common, but can be especially problematic in healthcare facilities.



If you suspect a norovirus outbreak or any disease outbreak, contact your **local health department** or the Tennessee Department of Health main office (615-741-7247) for assistance.



The **health department can assist** by:

- Providing norovirus-specific cleaning guidance
- Investigating the cause and spread of illness
- Identifying ways to stop the outbreak

**Stop Norovirus!**

Norovirus causes diarrhea and vomiting. It spreads easily from an infected person to others, especially in long-term care facilities. Elderly residents are more likely to become very sick or die from norovirus.

**Protect yourself and elderly residents from norovirus.**

**WASH YOUR HANDS** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time and avoid touching your mouth.

**CLEAN SURFACES** Use a bleach-based cleaner or other approved product to disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.

**WASH LAUNDRY** Remove and wash soiled clothes and linens immediately, then tumble dry.

**USE GOWN AND GLOVES** Use gowns and gloves when working or caring for patients to reduce exposure to vomit or fecal matter.

**STAY HOME WHEN SICK** If you're sick, stay home and don't take care of or visit people in long-term care facilities for at least 2 days after your symptoms stop.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/norovirus](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus).

**Help Prevent the Spread of Norovirus ("Stomach Bug")**

IF NOROVIRUS IS AFFECTING YOUR COMMUNITY, HERE ARE SOME ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP PREVENT FURTHER ILLNESS.

1. **Clean up surfaces**
  - a. Clean frequently touched surfaces with soapy water
  - b. Rinse thoroughly with plain water
  - c. Wipe dry with paper towels
  - d. Dispose of paper towels

**DON'T STOP HERE! GERM CAN REMAIN ON SURFACES EVEN AFTER CLEANING!**
2. **Disinfect surfaces**
  - a. Prepare and apply a chlorine bleach solution
 

1/2 cup of BLEACH	+ 1 GALLON of water
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1.5 cups of bleach per gallon of water. Dilute to 1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of water.
  - b. Leave surface wet for at least 5 minutes
  - c. Rinse all surfaces intended for food or mouth contact with plain water before use
3. **Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water**

Hand sanitizer may not be effective against norovirus.

**Remedy reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that this poster has been effective in reducing norovirus cases in long-term care facilities.**

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/norovirus](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus).

### Prevention resources can be found here:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/multimedia.html>
- <https://waterandhealth.org/resources/posters/#norovirus>

### Norovirus prevention in long-term care facilities guidance can be found here:

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/LTCF\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/LTCF_guidelines.pdf)

# Infection Control

An infection control program must include **seven** essential elements. Written infection control policies are required for each element.

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## Infection Control Risk Assessment

is a written document that is updated at least annually and clearly prioritizes infection control actions for the facility

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## Hand Hygiene

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is preferred except when *C. difficile* or norovirus are suspected, which require soap and water
- Hand hygiene dispensers are available at points of care
- The facility performs hand hygiene audits and provides staff feedback

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**Contact Precautions** which utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) and transmission-based precautions should include:

- Signage that clearly shows the type of PPE needed prior to entering a resident's room



- Competency-based education for donning / doffing PPE with return demonstration
- Regular audits and staff feedback regarding PPE compliance
- Contact precautions specific to norovirus, CRE, VRE and other multi-drug resistant organisms

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## Injection Safety

- should specify:
- Use of *One Needle, One Syringe, Only One Time*
  - Never administer medications from a single-dose vial or IV bag to multiple patients
  - Limit the use of multiple-dose vials and dedicate them to a single patient whenever possible



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## Infection Control Education

is required for all clinical and environmental services staff (EVS) upon hire and at least annually with return demonstration. This includes:

- EVS education for cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas for resident and common areas (shower rooms, etc.)
- Use of correct EPA-registered products and contact time ("kill times")  
<https://iaspub.epa.gov/apex/pesticides/f?p=PPLS:1>
- Education to ensure that equipment is cleaned and disinfected between patients with clarity about responsible party (e.g. glucometers → nursing staff)

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## Water Management Program

for prevention of *Legionella* and other waterborne pathogens:

- Create a team focused on keeping the facility's water safe
- Understand the building water system and identify areas where *Legionella* could grow or spread
- Take actions to prevent and control the growth and spread of *Legionella*
- Document the program and activities

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## State Reportable Diseases

guidance including:

- Have a current, readily available list of the state reportable conditions
- Report in required timeframes (online or using the PH-1600 form)
- Ensure the microbiology lab used submits required isolates to the State Laboratory

<https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/reportable-diseases.html>

## Questions?

Call: 615-741-7247

Email: [HAL.Health@tn.gov](mailto:HAL.Health@tn.gov)