QUICK FACTS FOR GASTROINTESTINAL OUTBREAKS IN SCHOOLS

IDENTIFICATION
Outbreak: an increase in illness above the expected rate.
• What is your “normal” rate of illness/absence?
• Take seasonal patterns into account
• Rough indicator of an outbreak: a doubling in the number of students absent due to a similar illness over that of normal for a particular time of year.

REPORTING
If you suspect an outbreak, contact your school’s health department:
• Franklin County Public Health (via IDRS): 614-525-8888
  • (Schools not in Columbus or Worthington)
• Columbus Public Health: 614-645-1474
  • (Schools in Columbus or Worthington)
• If you’re not sure which to contact, call the reporting line: 614-525-8888.

DATA GATHERING
• Track ill students during an outbreak using a line list
• Communicate updates and new cases to public health personnel daily
• Coordinate stool testing with public health personnel

CONTROL
Hand washing is the key to controlling all gastrointestinal outbreaks!
• Redouble efforts to promote hand washing: educate children, teachers, parents.
• Restrict sharing of any communal food items during outbreak (i.e. class parties)
• Exclude any ill staff for 48 hours after symptoms have resolved, ESPECIALLY food service staff!

Communications
• Coordinate notifications for staff and parents with public health personnel

Cleaning
• Deep clean/disinfect all bathroom areas including toilet handles, door handles, and sink handles.
• ALSO spot clean, disinfect, and rinse immediately after an episode of illness.
• Wear masks and gloves when cleaning areas contaminated by feces or vomitus.