Gastrointestinal infections

Gastrointestinal infections are infections that affect the digestive system, primarily caused by various bacteria, viruses, and parasites. These infections can result in symptoms like diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and fever.

While many gastrointestinal infections are relatively mild and self-limiting, they can have significant consequences for human health, especially among vulnerable populations such as the very young, the elderly, and individuals with weakened immune systems.

From a public health perspective, gastrointestinal infections pose several challenges. They can easily spread from person to person through contaminated food, water, or contact with infected individuals, leading to outbreaks in communities or even across regions. These outbreaks can strain healthcare systems and result in economic losses due to illness-related absenteeism and medical expenses. Public health measures, such as hygiene education, food safety regulations, and outbreak monitoring, are crucial in preventing the transmission of gastrointestinal infections and safeguarding the health of populations.

Drinking water and health: a guide for public and environmental health professionals and for those in the water industry in Northern Ireland

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of those organisations involved in the provision and safety of drinking water. It describes the arrangements and protocols in place to monitor compliance with standards and response to emergency or incident situations. It also contains reporting templates to be used by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and Environmental Health Departments.

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The guidelines are hosted on the NIW website.

Key areas of ongoing work

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- Development of regional outbreak plan
- Review and updating of protocols
- Continuous monitoring of gastro-intestinal diseases
- Audit of port health issues

Courses / conferences - Nil

Key links

Gastrointestinal infections factsheets | HSC Public Health Agency

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

Investigation questionnaires

Investigation Questionnaires

The following questionnaires should be used with effect from 1 January 2012. These supersede all previous versions.

- Food Poisoning Investigation Form Version 3
- Surveillance of Escherichia Coli O157 infection Version 3

Patient factsheets

Patient Factsheets

- Gastrointestinal infections factsheets | HSC Public Health Agency
    - (includes Collecting a stool sample factsheet, Cryptosporidium factsheet, Hepatitis A factsheet, Hepatitis E factsheet, Hepatitis E questionnaire, Reducing the spread of gastroenteritis, Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, Shigellosis factsheet, Typhoid fever factsheet)

- Campylobacter Factsheet
- Giardiasis Factsheet
- Food Poisoning Factsheet
- Salmonella Factsheet

Surveillance data

Please click here.

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/gastrointestinal-infections

Shiga toxin-producing E.coli (STEC)

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