Rotavirus

Last updated: 1 July 2018

Public Health Priority:
Routine
Public Health Response Time:
Enter on NCIMS within 3 working days of notification
Enter only confirmed cases
Case management:
Responsibility of the treating doctor
Case should not attend work, school or childcare until 24 hours after symptoms cease
Contact Management:
Responsibility of treating doctor

1. Reason for surveillance

To monitor the epidemiology of the disease and so inform better prevention strategies.

2. Case definition

Both confirmed cases and probable cases should be notified.

Confirmed case
A confirmed case requires either:

1. laboratory definitive evidence

   OR

2. laboratory suggestive evidence AND epidemiological evidence.

Probable case
A probable case requires laboratory suggestive evidence only.

Laboratory definitive evidence
Detection of wild-type rotavirus by nucleic acid testing.

Laboratory suggestive evidence

1. Detection of rotavirus by antigen assay

   OR

2. Detection of rotavirus by nucleic acid testing that does not distinguish between wild-type and vaccine-related virus

   OR

3. Detection of rotavirus by electron microscopy

   OR

4. Isolation of rotavirus.

Epidemiological evidence
The case is 8 months of age or older

OR

The case has not been vaccinated in the 4 weeks prior to testing.

3. Notification criteria and procedure

Rotavirus infection is notified by laboratories on microbiological confirmation (ideal reporting by routine mail).

Both confirmed and probable cases should be entered onto the Notifiable Condition Information Management System (NCIMS).

4. The disease

Infectious agent
Rotavirus is a virus in the Reoviridae family. Group A is common in humans; group B is uncommon in humans but has caused large outbreaks in China.

Mode of transmission
Primarily faecal oral contact and respiratory spread may be possible.

Timeline
The typical incubation period is approximately 24 to 72 hours.

Rotavirus is infectious for the duration of the acute stage of illness and later while the virus shedding continues. This usually lasts from 4 to 8 days but can be up to 30 days after onset of illness.

Clinical Presentation
Rotavirus can present as a range of illnesses from mild, watery diarrhoea of limited duration to severe, dehydrating diarrhoea with vomiting, fever, and shock.

Symptoms generally resolve in 3 to 7 days.

5. Managing Notifications

Response Times

Data Entry
Within 3 working days of notification enter both confirmed and probable cases on NCIMS.

For notified cases with a date of birth after 1 May 2007, ascertain their vaccination status from ACIR and include in NCIMS.

Response Procedure
None routinely. When a cluster is reported in an institutional setting follow the "Gastroenteritis in an Institution" response protocol.