



DIARRHEA OF THE NEWBORN (Outbreaks only)

1. **Agent:** Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EEC), enteroviruses, rotaviruses (RSV), *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Campylobacter*, *Pseudomonas*, *Staphylococci*, and other organisms known to cause diarrhea.

2. **Identification:**

a. **Symptoms:** Clinical syndrome affecting premature infants and infants under 1 month of age, characterized by severe diarrhea (explosive, watery with or without small amounts of blood or mucus), dehydration, and acidosis. Fever is absent or slight except when dehydration or pyogenic complications occur.

Suspect Case: Any hospitalized neonate (under 1 month of age) or any infant hospitalized due to prematurity, or any neonate within 4 days of discharge who has 2 or more abnormal stools within a 24-hour period, with or without other signs of illness.

Case: As described above, plus when diarrhea is continuous for more than 48 hours or when laboratory confirmation of etiologic agent.

b. **Differential Diagnosis:** Systemic diseases of infants associated with diarrhea.

c. **Diagnosis:** Feces, urine and blood cultures, fecal smears.

3. **Incubation:** Variable depending on etiology.

4. **Reservoir:** Variable depending on etiology.

5. **Source:** Feces, contaminated fomites, and upper respiratory secretions.

6. **Transmission:** Contaminated hands, fomites, formula, and airborne droplets. Perinatal transmission can occur during delivery.

7. **Communicability:** Varies with organism.

8. **Specific Treatment:** Immediate supportive care; treatment varies with etiologic agent.

9. **Immunity:** Varies with agent, generally none.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Outbreaks should be reported immediately by telephone, Section 2500, *California Code of Regulations*. Single cases of diarrhea of the newborn may warrant investigation.

2. **Report Forms:** (Required for outbreaks only.)

a. For outbreaks not in a health facility:

Report Form: OUTBREAK/ UNUSUAL DISEASE REPORT FORM (DHS 8554, 03/00)

b. For outbreaks in a health care facilities:

CD OUTBREAK NOTICE — HEALTH CARE FACILITY (H-1163, 1/78)

CD OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION — HEALTH CARE FACILITY (H-1164, 1/78)

3. **Epidemiologic Data:**

a. Birth date; hospital of birth and hospital number, discharge date, subsequent hospitalization; mother's name.

b. Source, preparation, and changes of formula, food and water.

c. Illness in caretaker.

d. Indicate whether mother was symptomatic with diarrhea prior to or at delivery.

e. Occupation of adult contacts.

f. Stool or blood cultures and antibiotic sensitivity reports.

CONTROL OF CASE, CONTACTS & CARRIERS

Investigate within 24 hours.

SUSPECT CASE:

1. **Precautions:** Enteric.



- a. Restrict and release according to specific etiologic agent.
- b. Encourage medical evaluation of infant.

CONTACTS:

1. Definition:

- a. Household members and persons who provide infant care.
 - b. If an outbreak, includes nursery cohorts, nursery staff, and physicians.
2. Obtain feces specimens from persons providing care or household members if currently or recently symptomatic.
 3. Keep symptomatic infant from other asymptomatic household siblings.

DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES

1. Bacterial

Container: Enterics.

Laboratory Form: Test Requisition and Report Form H-3021 or online request if electronically linked to the Public Health Laboratory.

Examination Requested: Diarrhea of newborn; state etiologic agent if known or suspected.

Material: Feces—marble size. Follow insert instructions.

Storage: Protect from overheating. DO NOT REFRIGERATE.

Remarks: If applicable, identify with outbreak and infant numbers. Notify lab of outbreak and potential number of specimens.

2. **Viral:** Isolation attempts usually unrewarding. Occasional enterovirus or adenovirus recovered but significance not known.

Test: Viral Culture.

Container: Sterile, 30-oz., wide mouth, screw-capped bottle.

Laboratory Form: Test Requisition and Report Form H-3021 or online request if electronically linked to the Public Health Laboratory.

Material: 2-3 grams of stool (no preservative).

Storage: Keep chilled. Deliver to laboratory within 48 hours.

PREVENTION-EDUCATION

1. Stress hand washing and personal hygiene, especially in caretakers.
2. Do not use kitchen sink to bathe infant or wash clothes.
3. Launder and store clothing and diapers properly.
4. Prepare and/or store infant formula or food properly.