

Notifiable Diseases in Tasmania

A Guide for Institutions

Notification of gastroenteritis outbreaks

Public health legislation in Tasmania changed after Parliament passed the Public Health (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2015. The HIV/AIDS Preventive Measures Act 1993 (HIV Act) no longer exists, consequential changes occurred to the Corrections Act 1997, and parts of the Public Health Act 1997 have changed. Consequently there are now revised Guidelines for Notifying Diseases and Food Contaminants, which are effective from 18 January 2016.

The Public Health Act requires that certain medical conditions be notified to the Director of Public Health (DPH). This includes outbreaks of diseases which should be notified to the Communicable Disease Prevention Unit (CDPU) by institutions.

Under previous versions of the Guidelines, outbreaks of gastroenteritis in institutions such as residential, educational or childcare facilities were required to be notified by medical practitioners or hospitals.

In this revised version of the Guidelines the superintendent and the senior health professional responsible for care in a residential, educational, healthcare, or childcare facility, who is aware or suspects there is an outbreak of gastroenteritis in the institution is required to notify the DPH of the outbreak and provide details of the outbreak cases. Notification allows for public health action to provide assistance in the management of these outbreaks and to control the spread of disease.

This notification requirement in the newly revised Guidelines formalises the processes which have been occurring for some time as it has been common for childcare centres and aged care facilities to notify public health of an outbreak in their institution.

Notification of a suspected gastroenteritis outbreak in an institution can be made by calling the Public Health Hotline – Tasmania on **1800 671 738**.

The list of the current notifiable diseases and the Guidelines for Notifying Diseases and Food Contaminants can be found at the [Public Health Services website](#).

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