COBB COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

Policy # 3042  E Coli Gastroenteritis or Bacterial Gastroenteritis

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Approved: 
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POLICY: It is the policy of Cobb County Community Services Board and Douglas County Community Services Board (the CSB) that all efforts will be made to prevent the spread of gastroenteritis by having the infected person seek medical attention at the first signs of symptoms.

E Coli Gastroenteritis or Bacterial gastroenteritis is caused by a bacterial infection of the intestinal tract. The inflammation disrupts normal absorption of food and water, resulting in diarrhea. Most bacterial gastroenteritis infections are short-lived and require little more than general supportive care.

PROCEDURE:

1. Gastroenteritis Transmission
   - The stool of infected persons is passed from one person to another if hygiene or hand washing habits are inadequate.
   - Consumption of meat (particularly ground beef) that has not been cooked sufficiently to kill the bacteria and the consumption of contaminated sprouts, lettuce, or spinach.
   - Drinking unpasteurized juice or milk can also transmit the bacteria.
   - Some infections have developed after swimming in contaminated water.
   - Most cases of gastroenteritis are caused by eating contaminated food.
   - Those who are infected may not develop symptoms for several days.
   - During this time, the infection can spread.

2. Gastroenteritis Symptoms
   - Anorexia
   - Chills
   - Cramping abdominal pain:
     - Lower abdominal pain
     - Upper abdominal pain
   - Diarrhea:
     - May cause bloody stool
     - Stool may contain green or yellow mucus
   - Excessive flatulence (gas)
• Fever
• Indigestion
• Malaise
• Nausea
• Stool incontinence
• Vomiting

**Notify the doctor if there are any of the following symptoms**

• Blood in the stool:
  o Black stool
  o Rectal bleeding
  o Red stools
• Diarrhea that contains pus
• Fainting
• Fever over 101 degrees F (38.3 C)
• Decreased urination:
  o Urinating less than 3 times over 24 hours
• Jaundice:
  o Yellow skin
  o Yellow eyes
• No improvement after 3 days
• Repeated vomiting for more than 8 hours
• Worsening abdominal pain

3. **Gastroenteritis Prevention**

• Wash your hands after using the toilet.
• Avoid eating raw clams or oysters.
• Do not drink unpasteurized milk.
• Do not share food utensils.
• Wash vegetables or fruits thoroughly.
• Wash your hands after handling raw meat, seafood, or poultry.
• Never use the same cutting board when preparing meats or vegetables unless thoroughly washed between use.
• Make sure all meat, poultry and fish products are well cooked.
• Re-heat leftover foods thoroughly.

4. **Gastroenteritis Treatment may include**

• Oral rehydration therapy:
  o Drink clear liquids only, such as water, sports drinks (best), fruit juice and dilute tea.
  o Drink small quantities of fluids frequently, such as 2 tablespoons of fluid every 5 minutes.
  o The absence of food allows the intestines to rest.
  o May be able to advance to full liquid diet once symptoms improve
  o Effective to treat mild to moderate dehydration
• BRAT diet (i.e. bananas, rice, applesauce, toast)
5. Medications for nausea and vomiting:
   a. Reglan
   b. Zofran
   c. Compazine, Compro

6. Medications for diarrhea:
   a. Imodium
   b. Lomotil

7. Contagious Period
   • Those with bacterial gastroenteritis are not contagious after 48 hours of antibiotic therapy.

7. Return Work/Program
   • Client or staff may return to their program following an episode of gastroenteritis. They should be asymptomatic (no symptoms) for 24 hours for viral and 48 hours for bacterial infections.