



**Alabama Department of Public Health
Bureau of Communicable Diseases
Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division**

Outbreak Investigation Actions

An “outbreak” is defined as two or more similarly ill people who live in different households and have a common exposure. An outbreak of any kind is a notifiable condition and must be reported to the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division (ID&O) within 24 hours. A common exposure may include but is not limited to food, water, facility, object, or person. Each outbreak is unique, so the order of actions listed below may vary from outbreak to outbreak, or additional actions may be added.

Outbreak Investigation Actions

Central Office Investigation Staff will:

- Follow outbreak investigation protocols and create an Outbreak Folder, Epidemiology Outbreak Investigation Report (EOIR) and Line List.
- Send an e-mail notification to State Outbreak Group & affected District Outbreak Group.
- Provide support to District Investigator(s) as needed.

District Investigation Staff will:

- Call the facility, event coordinator, or ill to obtain information regarding the possible outbreak.
- Submit an electronic Line List to the facility to complete and e-mail back to the District Investigator.
- Use the hypothesis-generating questionnaires (HGQs) when interviewing ill. Complete 3 to 5 HGQs and submit electronically via the secure online form to Central Office **within 3 hours of the interview**.
- Obtain clinical specimens and submit to the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL), if appropriate.
- Request an ADPH Environmentalist conduct an assessment, if appropriate.
- **Provide control measures, prevention, and mitigation recommendations** to the school or facility within the timeframe specified for disease classification.
- Conduct interviews of ill and not ill using the outbreak-specific questionnaire (OSQ), if applicable. Completed questionnaires will be submitted electronically via the LCMS form. An Epidemiologist will determine the number of persons to be interviewed.
- If the outbreak source is identified, District Investigator will contact the school or facility, and provide educational information and additional recommendations.
- Provide exit interview within 2 weeks of closure of outbreak.
- Schedule and conduct a DETECT, TEST, and REPORT (DTR) presentation for notifiable disease reporters or Community DTR for non-notifiable disease reporters if outbreak was not reported within 24 hours of outbreak identification. Schedule other educational presentations with facility as appropriate. Document the date presentation was provided to the facility on the original EOIR.

Bureau of Clinical Laboratories will:

- Provide consultation on clinical and environmental testing to be performed.
- Test specimens and report results to Central Office Outbreak Group.

Epidemiology, Surveillance & Informatics Staff will:

- If applicable, create an outbreak specific questionnaire (OSQ) within 24 hours of receiving the 3-5 HGQ's and any other exposure information requested (e.g., menus) from the District Investigator.
- Notify District Investigator if an outbreak-specific questionnaire needs to be administered to gather additional elements for analysis.
- Monitor the EOIR daily and provide support to District Investigator and other bureaus as needed.
- Conduct appropriate analysis.
- Notify District Investigator that the final report has been published to website and is available for distribution to the facility.



Alabama Department of Public Health

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