



Ministry of Health & Human Services

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INCREASE IN GASTROENTERITIS CASES SEEN AT THE BELAU NATIONAL HOSPITAL

Key Points

- **An increasing number of gastroenteritis cases were treated at the Belau National Hospital during the first week of the new year.**
- **Practice good hand hygiene and safe food preparation to avoid infection. Seek advice from a healthcare provider if symptoms are severe.**

The Bureau of Public Health is urging the public to take preventive measures against the spread of infection. Between January 2 - 8, 2023, at least 30 cases of gastroenteritis were reported through routine surveillance. Cases ranged in age from 1 – 78 years of age, with the majority under the age of 10. All cases are residents of Palau with a majority living in Koror (73%) and several residing in Babeldaob. One (1) pediatric case was hospitalized, treated and has been discharged.

What is Gastroenteritis:

Gastroenteritis is an inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines typically caused by a viral, bacterial or parasitic infection. Transmission occurs through contact with someone is sick, contaminated food or water, and unwashed hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper or preparing food.

Common symptoms include watery diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, cramping, fever and nausea. Dehydration may also occur as a result from diarrhea and vomiting. Supportive treatment of gastroenteritis includes rest and rehydration.

Prevention

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water after using the bathroom and before preparing or eating food.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, eating and drinking utensils, and bathroom sinks/toilets.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Practice basic food safety at home.
- Read labels and “Best if Used By/Before” dates on pre-packaged food before consumption.

See a healthcare provider immediately if symptoms are severe.

Communicable Disease Unit.....488-2450

Emergency Room.....488-2558

BNH Out-Patient Department....488-2555

For emergencies, please call.....911

For more information on Food Safety: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/free-publications-women/food-safety-home>