

# Rotavirus source in water supply yet to be found

**NEW CASES:** Total suspected acute gastroenteritis cases have risen to more than 2,600

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**A**NOTHER 142 new acute gastroenteritis (AGE) cases were detected in the Batang Padang and Hilir Perak districts yesterday, bringing the total number of suspected cases to 2,686 since late last month.

State Health Committee chairman Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon said 94 of the cases were in Hilir Perak and the rest in Batang Padang.

Of the cases, eight people had been admitted to a hospital in Hilir Perak and another six in Batang Padang Hospital. The patients included children and adults.

However, no new death has been

reported.

The AGE cases were said to be caused by the water-borne rotavirus, which brings about severe diarrhoea and vomiting.

Since it was first detected, two infants, aged 2 and 10 months, have died.

Dr Mah said the 17 people, who were admitted to hospital with AGE earlier, had been discharged.

He assured the public that the situation was under control and the state government and Health Ministry had taken measures to stop it from becoming widespread.

"The cases have been contained in the two districts.

"Samples have been collected

from various water inlets at the Bukit Temoh (Tapah) and Changkat Jong (Teluk Intan) dams.

"We hope to identify the cause of the rotavirus contamination soon," he said.

It was reported on Sunday that the majority of those affected were children in areas close to a water treatment plant that supplied water to the two districts.

Investigations showed that rotavirus had polluted the water.

Dr Mah again reminded the public to maintain personal hygiene, to boil their drinking water and ensure food was thoroughly cooked before consuming it.

He added that filtered water needed to be boiled as the virus was

able to pass through water filters.

"If these precautionary measures are heeded, new cases can be prevented."

Dr Mah said rotavirus was normally present in stable concentrations in a natural environment and could also be found in the faeces of birds, cows and humans.

"There is no evidence of a large-scale pollution, but we have yet to pin-point the source of the rotavirus in the water supply."

The public are advised to immediately seek treatment at the nearest clinic or hospital if they have any of the AGE symptoms, such as fever, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, stomach ache, headache and loss of appetite.