Figure 3: Flow chart – Investigation and management of gastroenteritis outbreaks

**Gastrointestinal outbreak**
Two or more cases of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 24 hour period that are epidemiologically related in time, place or person

**Initial response**
- Establish the existence of an outbreak
- Conduct a site visit
- Confirm the diagnosis
- Form outbreak team
- Define cases and establish the number of cases
- Collect time, person and place data and develop an epicurve to determine the mode of transmission
- Determine the at risk population
- Provide advice on infection control measures

**Assess mode of transmission**

**If suspected food- or waterborne**
Form an outbreak investigation team who will:
- Obtain necessary information, such as menus of items consumed, to expedite the investigation
- Develop and test hypothesis
- Conduct an analytical study involving both ill and well people
- Conduct environmental investigation to establish the source of infection, including testing of food and environmental samples where appropriate
- Institute the necessary control and prevention measures
- Write an outbreak report

**If suspected person-to-person**
Form an outbreak investigation team who will:
- Conduct environmental investigations
- Institute the necessary control and preventive measures
- Write an outbreak report