



Long-Term Care Facilities

Guidance for Identifying, Reporting, Preventing, and Controlling Respiratory Illness Outbreaks

These guidelines are intended to help long-term care facilities (LTCF) in respiratory illness outbreaks.

Risk of respiratory illness

Residents in these settings may be at a higher risk of developing severe complications from respiratory illnesses due to chronic health conditions, weakened immunity, age, and close living quarters.

Surveillance and testing

Determining which type of respiratory illness (Influenza, COVID-19, RSV, or other) a person may have is difficult based on symptoms alone.

LTC residents who are experiencing respiratory illness should be tested. If one LTC resident tests positive, begin daily active surveillance for respiratory symptoms in other residents.

What is a respiratory illness outbreak?

COVID-19: Two or more probable or confirmed cases among residents **OR** two or more suspect, probable or confirmed cases among health care personnel **AND** one or more probable or confirmed case among residents.

Influenza: Two or more lab confirmed cases identified within 72 hours of each other among residents within the same unit or other common exposure.

RSV or other respiratory illnesses: an unusual occurrence or increase in the number of people experiencing respiratory illness above what is normally expected within a facility or unit.

For consultations on possible outbreaks, contact your regional public health office.

What to report to public health

- The number of ill people
- Symptoms and onset date
- Test results
- Affected areas/units of the facility
- Hospitalizations and deaths
- Treatment and mitigation measures already taken.

How to report to public health

COVID-19: report according to CMS and South Carolina reporting laws.

Influenza, RSV or other respiratory illness: Contact your regional health department as listed on the SC List of Reportable Conditions which can be found at dph.sc.gov/professionals/health-professionals/sc-list-reportable-conditions.

Resources

Viral Respiratory Pathogens Toolkit for Nursing Homes:

cdc.gov/long-term-care-facilities/hcp/respiratory-virus-toolkit/index.html

COVID-19 Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel :

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html

Prevention Strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings:

cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm

National Healthcare and Safety Network:

cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/index.html