

Wednesday, 21 August 2024

Health Protection

Guidance on the management of COVID-19/Influenza in care homes and other residential facilities
Updated September 2023
HSC Public Health Agency

Do residents or staff have any of the following symptoms (new or worsening)?

- Continuing cough
- Fever (37.8°C or above) or chills
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
- Muscle aches or pains
- Loss of appetite
- Headache that is unusual or lasts longer than normal
- Sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- Diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting

OR
Sudden decline in physical or mental ability without other known cause eg delirium, new onset confusion, reduced alertness and mobility

OR
A positive test for COVID-19 or influenza.

If there are two or more residents or members of staff with onset of symptoms occurring within 14 days,
YOU MIGHT HAVE AN OUTBREAK.

Contact the PHA Duty Room on 0300 555 0119 for a risk assessment and take infection control measures.
If you are concerned about a resident's clinical condition, contact their GP or out of hours service.

The Public Health Agency will:

- risk assess for evidence of transmission within the home;
- provide verbal and written advice on PPE, measures;
- work with care home staff to assess if further interventions are required.

Outbreak and infection control measures
Refer to PHA guidance for more detailed information

Hand hygiene and personal protective equipment

- Ensure that liquid soap and disposable paper towels are available at all hand wash sinks.
- Wash hands thoroughly using liquid soap and water, using the seven step technique. Follow the 5 moments for hand hygiene:
 - 1 Before patient contact
 - 2 Before a clean/aseptic procedure
 - 3 After body fluid exposure risk
 - 4 After patient contact
 - 5 After contact with patient surroundings
- Staff should wear single use plastic aprons, gloves and surgical masks when caring for residents. Eye protection may be required under certain circumstances. For detailed advice see <https://www.infectioncontrolmanual.net/infection-prevention-and-control-measures-respiratory-illness>

Cleaning and waste disposal

- Increase cleaning of the environment. Pay special attention to touch points and shared equipment eg hoists.
- Encourage using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes. Rinse the tissue and kill germs by washing hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Provide tissues and covered sputum pots for affected residents.
- Dispose of these and personal protective equipment as clinical waste.
- Provide foot operated bin for used tissue disposal in public areas.
- Ensure proper cleaning and replacement of oxygen/humidifier equipment.
- Affected residents' laundry should be treated as infected.

Reducing exposure

- Follow physical distancing and current guidance for unaffected residents.
- Admissions/transfers to the nursing home from a HCT facility should only take place following a risk assessment on a case-by-case basis in line with current guidance.
- Staff should work in separate teams: one team caring for affected residents and the other caring for unaffected residents, where possible.
- Agency and temporary staff should shower and put on a clean uniform before moving to another facility.
- Staff with COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and take an LFD test. If positive they should continue to self-isolate for 10 days. Isolation may be reduced following risk assessment and testing. See the care home guidance link below.
- Waiting may need to be restricted following a risk assessment.
- Identify hand hygiene point, with soap and water, for visitors on entering and leaving home. This practice must be reinforced during an outbreak.
- Discuss the presence of an outbreak with Trust facilities or services before any transfers.

Care home guidance can be found here: <http://pha.site/guidance-healthcare>
Public Health Agency Duty Room 0300 555 0119.
HSC Health Agency 12-13, Linfield Street, Belfast BT9 6AD. Tel: 0300 555 0119. www.publichealth.hsc.nhs.uk PHA 0822

This poster gives advice to care homes on the actions they should take in the case of an outbreak of COVID-19 or influenza.

Details

Format

A3 poster printed July 2022; updated version PDF only

Target group

Health professionals

Downloads

Attachment

Size

[Care homes outbreak A3 poster FINAL 0724_0.pdf](#) 729.03 KB

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