



Controlling Respiratory Outbreaks: What Visitors Need to Know

Outbreaks of illness in long term care homes or other healthcare facilities can be very stressful for residents, staff, visitors and family members. However for residents, outbreaks can be more than just stressful, they can be life-threatening. For the health and well-being of residents it is important to control and stop outbreaks as quickly as possible. Follow these steps to help stop the spread of illness:

Do not visit if you are ill

Visiting a resident when you are not feeling well puts **everyone** in the facility at risk. Keep infants and children at home if they are not feeling well. Do not visit if you have a cold or any of the following symptoms:

- Fever, cough, runny nose, sneezing, stuffy nose, sore throat.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, vomiting or nausea.

Check-in at the nursing station

- Control measures may change several times during an outbreak. Staff at the nursing station will provide you with information on control measures that are being used at that time, and help answer your questions.

Keep your hands clean

Wash hands using soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Immediately when you enter the facility and as you leave.
- Before entering a resident's room and as you leave a resident's room.
- Before and after feeding a resident or providing care to a resident.
- Before eating.
- After using the washroom.

If a resident is ill, visit in the resident's room only

- Ill residents should remain in their rooms. Avoid taking an ill resident to a common area during your visit.

Do not visit more than one resident

- After visiting a resident, leave the facility immediately
- To protect yourself, avoid common areas (e.g. dining room).

Get our flu shot (influenza vaccine)

- Influenza can cause serious complications such as pneumonia or death for the elderly.
- You can pass influenza to others **before you start to show any symptoms**. To protect yourself and your family, get your flu shot.

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Follow the facility's infection prevention and control instructions

- Follow the facility's instructions for precautions or personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, masks, eye protection or gowns), if required.
- If followed by everyone, control measures can control an outbreak.

Where can I find more information?

Talk to your doctor or call the Renfrew County and District Health Unit at 613-735-8666 or 1-800-267-1097, Ext. 666.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit
7 International Drive
Pembroke, Ontario K8A 6W5
613-735-8666 or 1-800-267-1097, Ext. 666.