



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF)

A new respiratory disease – coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) – is spreading globally and there have been instances of COVID-19 community spread in the United States. The general strategies CDC recommends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in LTCF are the same strategies these facilities use every day to detect and prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses like influenza.

Long-term care facilities concerned that a resident, visitor, or employee may be a COVID-2019 patient under investigation should contact their local or state health department immediately for consultation and guidance.

Prevent the introduction of respiratory germs INTO your facility

- Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors not to visit if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Assess residents symptoms of respiratory infection upon admission to the facility and implement appropriate infection prevention practices for incoming symptomatic residents.

Symptoms of respiratory infection, including COVID-19:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Prevent the spread of respiratory germs WITHIN your facility

- Keep residents and employees informed.
 - Describe what actions the facility is taking to protect them, including answering their questions and explaining what they can do to protect themselves and their fellow residents.
- Monitor residents and employees for fever or respiratory symptoms.
 - Restrict residents with fever or acute respiratory symptoms to their room. If they must leave the room for medically necessary procedures, have them wear a facemask (if tolerated).
 - In general, for care of residents with undiagnosed respiratory infection use Standard, Contact, and Droplet Precautions with eye protection unless suspected diagnosis requires Airborne Precautions (e.g., tuberculosis).
 - Healthcare personnel should monitor their local and state public health sources to understand COVID-19 activity in their community to help inform their evaluation of individuals with unknown respiratory illness. If there is transmission of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to implementing the precautions described above for residents with acute respiratory infection, facilities should also consult with public health authorities for additional guidance.
- Support hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as cough etiquette by residents, visitors, and employees.

- Ensure employees clean their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with residents, after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment, and after removing personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Put alcohol-based hand rub in every resident room (ideally both inside and outside of the room).
- Make sure tissues are available and any sink is well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
- Identify dedicated employees to care for COVID-19 patients and provide infection control training.
 - Guidance on implementing recommended infection prevention practices is available in CDC's free online course — The Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training — which includes resources checklists for facilities and employees to use.
- Provide the right supplies to ensure easy and correct use of PPE.
 - Post signs on the door or wall outside of the resident room that clearly describe the type of precautions needed and required PPE.
 - Make PPE, including facemasks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves, available immediately outside of the resident room.
 - Position a trash can near the exit inside any resident room to make it easy for employees to discard PPE.

Prevent the spread of respiratory germs BETWEEN facilities

- Notify facilities prior to transferring a resident with an acute respiratory illness, including suspected or confirmed COVID-19, to a higher level of care.
- Report any possible COVID-19 illness in residents and employees to the local health department, including your state HAI/AR coordinator.

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.cdc.gov/covid19.

Page last reviewed: March 1, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases