

Outbreak of Influenza-like Illness at a Long-Term Care Facility

Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Staff

What is an outbreak of an influenza-like illness?



A single resident with a positive flu test **and** two or more additional residents with respiratory illness symptoms.

or

Two or more residents with at least two of the following symptoms:

- fever of 100° F or more
- nonproductive cough
- myalgia
- pharyngitis

If an outbreak is suspected:

- 1** Report influenza-like illness outbreaks to the Health Department 24/7 by using the [Viral Respiratory Disease Outbreak Report Form](#) or by calling **802-863-7240**. The Health Department will ask about symptoms, onset, case totals, exposure, treatments, outcomes and actions taken. Review [COVID-19 outbreak recommendations in case of both illnesses being spread at the same time](#).
- 2** Collect specimens from **3-5** residents within 72 hours of symptom onset for laboratory testing.
- 3** Treat symptomatic residents with antivirals. Do not wait for laboratory confirmation of flu.
- 4** Start a list of sick residents and staff and track symptom onset.

Take action to control the outbreak:

- Stop taking new admissions and transfers when possible.
- Discourage symptomatic people from visiting.
- Follow droplet precautions for symptomatic residents.
- Encourage symptomatic residents to practice respiratory hygiene.
- Ensure ill employees do not work.
- Do not float staff between units.
- Provide training in infection control and hand hygiene for staff.
- Restrict symptomatic residents to their rooms, or cohort on the affected unit.
- Limit group activities and serve meals in rooms.
- If a resident is transferred to another facility during the outbreak, notify the receiving facility of the outbreak whether or not the individual has symptoms.
- Offer influenza vaccine to unvaccinated staff, residents and new admissions throughout flu season.

For more information:

HealthVermont.gov/FluOutbreak