

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

Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Staff

COVID-19 Updates:

- Test symptomatic residents for COVID-19, even if there is a flu outbreak at your facility.
- Symptomatic staff should be excluded from work and should contact their health care provider.
- The Health Department will work closely with any facility with a case of COVID-19.
- Refer to the [Health Alerts](#) and the COVID-19 page for [long-term care facilities](#) for up-to-date information.
- If COVID-19 has been ruled out, the steps on this guide remain appropriate.

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 calling **802-863-7240**. The Health Department will ask about symptoms, onset, case totals, exposure, treatments, outcomes and actions taken.
2. Collect specimens from 4-6 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.
- Consider newly symptomatic residents for both flu and SARS-CoV-2 infections.
- Prohibit symptomatic people from visiting (discuss end of life exceptions with the Health Department).
- Follow droplet and contact 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.
- Stop 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 flu vaccine to unvaccinated staff, residents and new admissions throughout the flu season.

For more information:

healthvermont.gov/fluoutbreak