

Acute Respiratory Infections (ARIs) including influenza, COVID-19 and RSV

Winter is coming – are you ready?

PREPARE

Infection prevention
SAVES LIVES

- Develop and implement a Winter Plan including vaccination provision, PPE and other consumables stockpile, outbreak management, anti-viral treatment, testing and workforce contingencies.
- Provide annual infection control training to all staff and ensure staff are familiar with clinical management pathways and outbreak management. Monitor hand hygiene and PPE practice.

PROTECT

Vaccinate staff and residents

- Actively promote the benefits of COVID-19 and annual influenza vaccinations to staff, contractors, residents, volunteers and visitors.
- Ensure all staff, including students and volunteers, are up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccination and encourage annual influenza vaccination.
- Prepare early for your mandatory annual influenza vaccination program. Consider providing COVID-19 booster vaccinations concurrently.
- Isolate symptomatic residents and exclude all symptomatic staff and visitors from the facility.

IDENTIFY

Monitor for outbreaks
and notify early

- Actively monitor staff and residents for symptoms of ARI, including cough, breathing difficulty, sore throat or runny nose/nasal congestion or change in baseline condition with or without other symptoms.
- When ARI symptoms are detected in a single resident, isolate the resident and initiate procedures as per your Outbreak Management Plan.
- Declare an Outbreak and notify the local Public Health Unit (PHU) when:
 - 2 or more residents test positive to either COVID-19 or influenza within a 72-hour period OR
 - 2 or more epidemiologically-linked acute respiratory infections in residents, where influenza and COVID-19 have been excluded, within a 72-hour period.

RESPOND

Seek support and respond
rapidly

- An early and rapid outbreak response reduces the number of ill residents and staff.
- Contact your local PHU early for advice and resources on managing outbreaks.

Vaccination requirements and visitor restrictions

Everyone entering a residential care facility should be asymptomatic and be encouraged to be vaccinated against influenza (flu) and COVID-19 to provide the best protection for the residents. In QH facilities, all staff, volunteers and students must be up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Decisions about vaccination requirements of entry and visiting restrictions during outbreaks are the responsibility of the facility owner or operator and should comply with the [Industry Code for Visiting in Aged Care Homes](#).

Suggested strategies to increase staff vaccination:

- providing free influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations onsite,
- ensuring all staff working all shifts are able to access free vaccine,
- actively promoting individual and public health vaccination benefits by providing education and written information,
- providing staff information that clearly links staff vaccination policies to broader infection control policies and staff health programs,
- providing appropriate incentives and recognition for vaccinated staff.

Resources for residential aged care facilities

[CDNA Guidelines for management of outbreaks of ARIs in RCFs](#)

[Winter Plan for RCFs](#)

[Disease prevention in residential care facilities](#)

[Managing Influenza and COVID-19 in residential aged care](#)

[Information for aged care providers, workers and residents about COVID-19 vaccines](#)

[COVID-19 advice for people in residential aged care home and visitors](#)

[Queensland Public Health Units](#)