

Important public health information

Queensland Government providing Oseltamivir for influenza outbreaks in residential aged care facilities.

There has been a high number of laboratory confirmed influenza cases reported to date this year compared to the same period in previous years. The greatest burden of disease has been in children younger than 5 years of age followed by adults aged 65 years and older, with the highest rate of deaths being in those aged 65 years and older.

Influenza is a serious issue in residential aged care facilities both because of the vulnerability of residents and the environment of communal living which facilitates the spread of respiratory viruses.

Vaccination of residential aged care staff and residents, early identification and reporting of influenza outbreaks, implementation of infection control recommendations and the appropriate prescription and administration of antiviral medication will assist with preventing or rapidly controlling an influenza outbreak.

The Department of Health is making antiviral medication (Oseltamivir 75 mg and 30 mg) available for use in residential aged care facilities as an adjunct to managing influenza outbreaks within the facility.

Residential aged care facilities should actively monitor staff and residents for influenza-like illness and promptly notify the local Public Health Unit of three or more cases of influenza-like illness that are detected in staff or residents within a 72-hour period. Residential aged care facilities should work closely with their local Public Health Unit to provide a rapid response, monitor and control the outbreak.

Access to Oseltamivir will be through the local Public Health Unit following verification of an influenza outbreak in a residential aged care facility.

Contact details for your local public health unit can be found here

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units>

Further information:

Information on influenza in residential care facilities: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/care-facilities/prevention/influenza-in-residential-care-facilities>

Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of Influenza Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities in Australia:

<https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-flu-guidelines.htm>

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