

Managing winter respiratory illnesses – infection control checklist for ARC facilities

Winter respiratory illnesses can easily spread and prevention is the most important thing you can do to help staff and residents stay healthy over the winter. The more layers of protection you put in place, the harder it will be for infections to spread.

- Liaise with your facility's GP or healthcare provider to review and/or update your staff and visitor illness policies, and make these available and visible for staff and visitors. Staff should stay home if feeling unwell.
- Ensure that there is easy access to healthcare (pharmacy or GP) for residents who are sick. Over-the-counter symptom relief can help to limit spread.
- Ensure that there are disposable tissues and bins in every room within easy access.
- Remind everyone to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, then put the tissue in a bin and wash hands with soap and water. Encourage residents to use disposable tissues, not cloth handkerchiefs.
- Ensure everyone is able to wash their hands often with warm water and soap and dry their hands thoroughly after.
- Hand sanitizer should be easily accessible to everyone, even those in wheelchairs. Hand sanitizer cannot replace hand washing before and after eating, or after you have used the bathroom.
- Regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces with sodium hypochlorite (bleach solutions). There are posters on [how to dilute bleach](#) available for printing.
- Let fresh air inside regularly by opening windows and doors several times a day. If you're in a building that has a ventilation system, check if your facility's ventilation system filters (cleans) the air.
- Consider mask use for those who have respiratory symptoms to limit the spread of an infectious illness. Evidence shows that wearing masks when you are sick can protect others from getting sick too.

Consider putting up signs to remind visitors to rethink visiting if they are unwell and to follow good infection prevention and control while visiting.

REMINDER: COVID-19, seasonal influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are not notifiable so you do not need to contact the National Public Health Service when you have cases.