

Checklist of Best Practices to Keep Infectious Diseases from Spreading in Nursing Homes

This checklist supplements healthcare agency (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.) guidelines to keep residents, staff and visitors safe in nursing homes. The risks associated with COVID-19, flu, pneumonia, shingles and other diseases are high, especially for adults 65 and older. Vaccinations, along with other infection prevention measures, have been proven to reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death.

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Visitation

- Create and follow a written visitation plan based on CMS, CDC and local health department guidance as applicable.
- Display culturally appropriate visitation signage at the facility's entrance explaining the guidance for visitation, based on CMS guidelines for infectious diseases, including flu and COVID-19.
- Date all posted signage.
- Laminate signage for easier cleaning.
- Ensure availability of hand hygiene products.

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Resident Placement & Transfers

- Maintain a written cohorting plan for new admissions and for residents who have tested positive or who are suspected of having infectious diseases as applicable.
- Document and communicate about residents with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and their vaccination status when transferring or discharging from the nursing home to another healthcare provider.
- Maintain a policy related to expectations for transmission-based precautions based on CDC guidelines.
- Provide education to residents about transmission-based precautions as applicable.

**Residents who were transferred to a different room within a facility or to a different facility as part of cohorting should be given the option to return to the previous room or stay in the new room depending on availability.*

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Screening, Testing & Reporting

- Test residents according to national standards such as CDC recommendations.
- Document testing completion and the results as appropriate.
- Notify the Department of Health about positive results as applicable.
- Report routinely to the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) as applicable.

Communicate Infections & Outbreaks

- Communicate information about infections and outbreaks according to CMS guidelines.
- Share information about infections and outbreaks with residents and their family members or caregivers through routine phone calls, routine emails and information posted on the facility website where applicable.

Checklist of Best Practices to Keep Infectious Diseases from Spreading in Nursing Homes

- Display culturally appropriate signage about outbreak status at the facility's entrance.
- Date all posted signage.
- Notify the Department of Health about positive results as applicable.
- Communicate information about infections and outbreaks to staff through routine blast text messages, routine emails, shift reports, huddles and/or communication boards.
- Document resident and staff COVID-19 positive cases timely in the CDC's NHSN.
- Limit communication about a resident's infectious disease status only to staff with a need to know to perform their assignment.

**Communication about the nursing home's infections or outbreak status to residents and family members should not include names or other identifiers.*

Educate Residents & Staff About the Signs & Symptoms of Infectious Diseases

- Include culturally appropriate information about infectious diseases in admission packets.
- Educate new and existing residents and their families on infectious diseases and document the education provided.
- Provide culturally appropriate training on infectious diseases to staff and document completion.
- Provide culturally appropriate training on infectious diseases to all new hires and document completion.
 - Documented staff training includes, but is not limited to:
 - ✓ Hand hygiene
 - ✓ Personal protective equipment (i.e., PPE donning and doffing, seal checks for respirators)
 - ✓ Transmission-based precautions
 - ✓ Vaccines

Stay Current with Vaccine Requirements & Treatment Options, Vaccine Access & Document Vaccine Education and Administration

- Maintain a written plan and a process for vaccinating all eligible staff and residents.
- Maintain a written plan for vaccine access and administration (i.e., clinics, local pharmacies, health department, etc.).
- Maintain a written plan and a process for vaccination exemptions.
- Educate staff and residents about the risks and benefits of vaccines as well as potential adverse effects in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Document vaccine education provided to staff and residents.
- Use and maintain appropriate tracking tools for vaccine administration, vaccination status and exemptions, and temporary deferrals.
- Use and maintain an appropriate vaccine administration form, including vaccine cards.
- Update residents and staff about disease prevention and medical treatment options.

Checklist of Best Practices to Keep Infectious Diseases from Spreading in Nursing Homes

Educate Staff & Residents About How to Maintain and Use Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19

- Regularly inventory personal protective equipment (PPE) and maintain documentation of supplies.
- Maintain a respiratory protection program (RPP) per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134) and complete respirator fit testing for all staff, documenting completion (conducted annually, upon hire and as needed for staff member physical changes or respirator manufacturer brand substitution).
- Educate staff and residents on how to wear PPE correctly, including when and where PPE is required. Additionally, educate staff on disinfection and storage of reusable PPE.
- Maintain and follow a written plan for disinfection of any reusable PPE.
- Educate staff about the appropriate sequence for donning and doffing PPE.
- Perform routine competency evaluations of PPE donning/doffing.

Cleaning, Disinfection & Environmental Infection Control

- Maintain and follow a written cleaning plan that includes a contingency plan for staff or supply shortages.
- Maintain and follow a written plan for routine cleaning and terminal cleaning of resident rooms, break rooms, clinical and non-clinical areas, and common areas.
- Use cleaning products registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be effective against infectious organisms.
- Communicate staff expectations for routine cleaning for each shift or assignment.
- Optimize the use of engineering controls and indoor air quality using CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) guidelines.
- Document a plan for providing aerosol generating procedures to residents with infectious diseases that can transmit infection via airborne particles and/or droplets.

Additional Resources

- [CMS Memo: QSO-20-39-NH REVISED](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes](#)
- [PPE Burn Rate Calculator](#)
- [Indoor Environmental Quality | NIOSH | CDC](#)