

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

This checklist supports healthcare agency recommendations (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), etc.) in place 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.

Prevention of Exposure: 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 laminated, dated, culturally appropriate visitation signage at facility's entrance explaining the guidance for visitation, based on CMS guidelines for infectious diseases. Provide additional signage if facility is in outbreak status with guidance/adjustments to visitation.
- ☐ Ensure availability of hand hygiene products and masks at facility entrances.

Prevention of Transmission: Follow CDC Guidelines for Screening, Testing, Reporting and Resident Placement

- ☐ Conduct routine surveillance for infections and follow CDC guidelines for transmission-based precautions.
- ☐ Test residents according to CDC recommendations, notify the department of health following the reportable diseases guidance timetable.
- ☐ Report according to CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).
- ☐ 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. Communicate information about infections and outbreaks to staff through routine blast text messages, routine emails, shift reports, huddles and/or communication boards. Limit communication about a resident's infectious disease status only to staff with a need to know to perform their assignment
- ☐ Maintain a respiratory protection plan (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 with documentation. Include guidance for providing aerosol generating procedures to residents with infectious respiratory organisms.
- ☐ Maintain adequate PPE inventory and perform audits for PPE appropriate compliance including proper donning/doffing.

Prevention of Transmission: Breaking the Chain of Infection

- ☐ Maintain and follow a written cleaning plan that includes contingencies for staff or supply shortages.
- ☐ Optimize the use of engineering controls and indoor air quality using CDC/National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) guidelines.
- ☐ Maintain and follow a written plan for routine cleaning and terminal cleaning of resident rooms, clinical and non-clinical areas and common areas.

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- ☐ Use cleaning products registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that are effective against infectious organisms.
- ☐ Document and communicate resident infectious status/isolation precautions when transferring or discharging from the nursing home to another healthcare provider and ensure transportation personnel are aware of any transmission-based precautions.

Prevention of Infection: Vaccine Education, Access and Administration

- ☐ Educate staff, residents and family members about the risks and benefits of vaccines as well as potential adverse effects in a culturally appropriate manner and include disease prevention and medical treatment options.
- ☐ Maintain a written plan and a process for vaccinating all eligible staff and residents and include process for vaccine exemptions.
- ☐ Use and maintain appropriate tracking forms for vaccine administration, vaccination status, deferrals and exemptions.
- ☐ Report according to CDC's NHSN.

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 at hire and update as appropriate for local incidence, and document completion.

Additional Resources



[Hand hygiene](#)



[Respiratory Virus Guidance](#)



[Personal protective equipment](#)



[Ventilation Can Reduce Exposure to Respiratory Viruses in Indoor Spaces](#)



[Transmission-based precautions](#)



[Training and Educational Materials](#)



[Best Practices Pocket Cards](#)

