

## Influenza in Long Term Care

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Influenza, also known as the flu, is a respiratory illness (RI) that infects the nose, throat and sometimes lungs. Young children, adults over the age of 65, pregnant women and long term care residents are at higher risk of serious illness from Influenza, which may require hospitalization.

### What are the symptoms?

Flu symptoms normally come on suddenly and may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Muscle or body aches
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache

### How does it spread?

The flu is primarily spread by droplets through coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread if a person touches a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touches their own mouth, nose or eyes.

A person can spread the virus from 1 day prior to the onset of their symptoms, up to 5 days after their symptoms start.

Younger children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems may be able to infect others for a longer period of time.

### Preventing transmission

#### Get your annual flu vaccine

This is the most important measure to prevent seasonal flu infection. Promote and offer flu vaccine to all long term care residents.

#### Adhere to droplet precautions

Place residents who have RI symptoms on droplet precautions.

Confirmed cases should remain on precautions for 5 days from onset of symptoms and clinical improvement, or completion of 5 day course of Tamiflu.

#### Maintain excellent hand hygiene

Wash your hands regularly. Cough and sneeze into your shirt sleeve rather than your hands. Promote these practices among residents and visitors.

#### Keep surfaces clear and free of clutter

Declutter common spaces and resident rooms to ensure surfaces can be disinfected.

# Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Fact Sheet

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### Managing outbreaks

An influenza outbreak occurs when there are two or more confirmed resident and/or staff cases within one week of each other on the same unit.

When this occurs:

- Isolate residents with any RI symptoms and place on droplet precautions.
- Collect PCR specimen from residents with suspected RI and submit to lab for testing
- Upload Tool 27 and 28 to [Cerberus file sharing service](#).

For more information refer to [Fraser Health's Viral Respiratory Illness Outbreak Protocol and Toolkit](#).

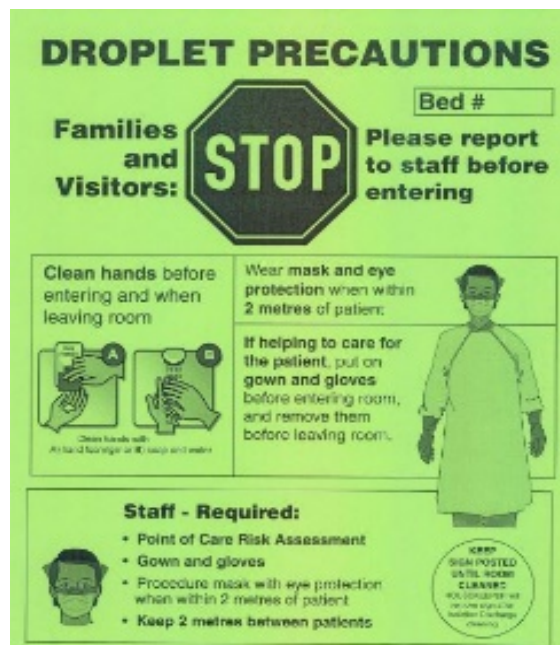
If you have additional questions contact Public Health's LTC Hub (778-368-0123).

If you require IPC support email [askIPCcommunity@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:askIPCcommunity@fraserhealth.ca).

### Additional resources

[Influenza \(Flu\) Season | HealthLink BC](#)

[Leaninghub: Viral Respiratory, COVID-19 and Gastrointestinal Illness \(RI/GI\) Outbreaks in Long term Care, Assisted Living and MHSU](#)



### References

Dolin, R. (2022). Influenza: Epidemiology and pathogenesis. Retrieved from [https://www.uptodate.com/contents/influenza-epidemiology-and-pathogenesis?search=influenza&source=search\\_result&selectedTitle=4~150&usage\\_type=default&display\\_rank=4](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/influenza-epidemiology-and-pathogenesis?search=influenza&source=search_result&selectedTitle=4~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=4)

HealthLinkBC. (2021, August). Facts about Influenza. Retrieved from <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/facts-about-influenza-flu>