

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Fact Sheet for Long-Term Care Residents

This fact sheet includes information to support your understanding, health, and well-being this Respiratory Illness Season.

VACCINE QUICK FACTS:

- ✓ Flu, RSV, COVID-19, and pneumococcal vaccines are all strongly recommended for every resident.
- ✓ Please consider getting your flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines this year.
- ✓ Consider getting a pneumococcal vaccine if you haven't had one yet.
- ✓ Staff at your home can help to answer any questions that you may have, clarify your eligibility, and let you know when each vaccine is available.

Influenza (Flu)

- You are encouraged to get your flu shot every year to prevent serious illness.
- Flu can be especially dangerous for older people.

COVID-19

- It is strongly recommended that you also get the COVID-19 vaccine even if you have gotten COVID-19 or the vaccine before.
- You can get another shot six months (or as early as three months) after your last one or after having had COVID-19.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- You are encouraged to get your RSV vaccine if you didn't get it last year.
- If you got your RSV vaccine last year, you do not need another one this year.

Pneumococcal

- Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. You may be at a higher risk if you are 65 years or older or have certain medical conditions or risk factors.
- If you previously have not received 2 doses of pneumococcal vaccine and are 65 years of age and older, you should get a dose of the new pneumococcal vaccine.
- You will only need 1 lifetime dose of the new pneumococcal vaccine.

Please Note: The flu, RSV, COVID-19, and pneumococcal vaccines can be administered at the same time if they are available at the same time.

Anti-viral medications

- ✓ Antiviral treatments for COVID-19 (including Paxlovid and Remdesivir) and flu (including Tamiflu) can prevent serious illness if you take them in the first few days after symptoms start.
- ✓ You might want to talk to staff in your home about availability of anti-virals in case you need them.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

Following infection prevention and control practices is always important, especially during respiratory illness season.

You can help keep your home safe by:

- ✓ Cleaning your hands often using hand sanitizer or soap and warm water
- ✓ Staying up to date with vaccinations.
- ✓ Wearing a mask, if and when possible.
- ✓ Letting staff know if you are feeling ill, and
- ✓ Telling your friends and family not to visit when they are ill.

What to expect if your home is in outbreak

You can expect the following if your home, or the area of the home you live in, is experiencing an outbreak of a respiratory illness (in outbreak).

- ✓ Homes will work with the local public health unit to manage the outbreak following the Ministry of Health's [Recommendations for Outbreak Prevention and Control in Institutions and Congregate Living Settings](#) as well as the IPAC Standard under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act.
- ✓ This must include ensuring that the rights of residents are fully respected, and that residents' psychosocial and other needs are prioritized.
- ✓ Staff, caregivers, and visitors must wear a mask at all times.
- ✓ Cohorting may be used, and group activities may be cancelled to keep infected residents separate, as appropriate.

- ✓ Wherever possible, continuing group activities for exposed groups of residents is recommended to support resident mental health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Residents experiencing respiratory illness symptoms are recommended to remain in their rooms and should avoid contact with other residents. Residents are allowed to attend medically necessary appointments or activities and should wear a mask.
- ✓ Essential visitors, including caregivers, can still visit during an outbreak, but general visitors may be limited or restricted.
- ✓ Homes are expected to regularly communicate with residents and families about the status of the outbreaks.
- ✓ Homes can't restrict or deny absences for medical, palliative, or compassionate reasons at any time, including if a resident is in isolation or when a home is in an outbreak.
- ✓ Every resident who is receiving end-of-life-care or who is very ill has the right to have loved ones present 24/7 under the [*Residents' Bill of Rights*](#).

What to expect if you have COVID-19 or your roommate has COVID-19

If you have COVID-19 and are unable to wear a mask, you will be isolated for a minimum of 10 days and until you are feeling better.

If you can tolerate wearing a mask, you may be removed from isolation after five days from symptom onset or positive test, and if you are feeling better - but wearing a mask is required when outside of your room.

- ✓ While isolated, you may leave your room for walks in the immediate area, with a staff member or caregiver who is wearing personal protective equipment.
- ✓ If your roommate has COVID-19, as a precaution, you will also be isolated in case you also have COVID-19.
- ✓ If you do not develop symptoms, you may discontinue isolation after a minimum of five days.

- ✓ After five days, it is advised that you wear a well-fitting mask, if tolerated, and physically distance from others when outside of your room for at least seven days from the last time you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Additional Resources

- To learn more about the flu shot, visit [Ontario.ca/flu](https://ontario.ca/flu)
- To learn more about the RSV shot, visit [Ontario.ca/rsv](https://ontario.ca/rsv) or refer to this [Ministry of Health Fact Sheet](#) about RSV
- To learn more about the COVID-19 shot visit [Ontario.ca/COVID-19](https://ontario.ca/COVID-19)
- Learn about eligibility for [COVID-19 antiviral treatment](#)
- To learn more about the pneumococcal shot, visit [Ontario's routine immunization schedule | ontario.ca](#)
- For any general inquiries you may contact the Ministry of Long-Term Care at: ltc.info@ontario.ca