

Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Outbreaks: Information leaflet for Residents and Carers

1. What is an acute respiratory infection (ARI) outbreak?

Acute respiratory infections lead to symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, muscle and joint aches and tiredness/fatigue. ARI affects many people particularly during the winter months and can be caused by a number of viruses such as Influenza (flu), COVID-19, other coronaviruses, Rhinovirus, Human metapneumovirus and others. Two or more cases of ARI occurring within 14 days in residents or staff from the same care home indicate that an outbreak of influenza or COVID-19 or other ARI is possible.

2. Recommended precautionary measures for homes with a ARI outbreaks

If the staff in the care home suspect an outbreak, they will ensure that measures are in place to reduce the risk of spread to other residents. They may also advise restrictions on staff and resident movements.

The local Health Protection Team will be supporting them in ensuring:

- adequate control measures are taken to prevent the spread of infection
- affected residents or staff receive appropriate treatment (if required) and
- residents, staff and carers receive appropriate and timely information on the measures being taken

3. What are the specific measures that staff can take?

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and dry thoroughly
- Dispose of used/dirty tissues as clinical waste
- Ensure frequent cleaning of surfaces
- Ensure that supplies for hand washing are available where sinks are located
- Provide tissues to residents and visitors who are coughing or sneezing so that they can cover their mouth and nose.
- Staff should use appropriate infection control precautions while dealing with affected residents e.g. gloves, single use apron, mask, eye protection

4. How can residents and carers help?

- Residents with ARI symptoms should
 - Avoid using common areas
 - Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
 - Sit at least 3 feet (1-2 m) away from others, if possible
- All residents can:
 - Discourage visitors, especially children and vulnerable adults
 - Support the home by adhering to other restrictions which may be needed

Carers, family and friends should not visit the home if there is an outbreak in the home or if they have flu/COVID-19 symptoms.

Useful guidance

Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878099/Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878099/Admission_and_Care_of_Residents_during_COVID-19_Incident_in_a_Care_Home.pdf)

Infection Prevention& Control and Personal Protective Equipment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

[Guidelines on the management of outbreaks of influenza-like illness in care homes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acute-respiratory-disease-managing-outbreaks-in-care-homes)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acute-respiratory-disease-managing-outbreaks-in-care-homes>

[COVID-19: guidance for residential care, supported living and home care](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance)

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