

Protect Your Long-Term Care Residents from Infections!

Respiratory illnesses are often spread on the hands of the ill person and by close contact with someone who is ill than by droplets in the air

Actions to protect residents:

1. Frequent and careful handwashing – including alcohol-based hand rubs – by all visitors can help stop the spread of infections within the long term care facility
 - a. Provide alcohol-based hands rubs at easy-access points for visitors
2. Promote appropriate respiratory and hand hygiene practices
 - a. Display “Cover Your Cough” posters and brochures in your facility

Infections circulating in the community are often brought into long term care facilities by visitors and staff

Actions to protect residents, staff and visitors:

1. Ask visitors to stay home when they are ill. Cold symptoms may seem mild to them, but can result in a serious, or even life-threatening, illness for an elderly or immunocompromised person
 - a. Post signs reminding visitors to stay home when ill
 - b. Include information in family orientation materials
2. Encourage family members to get vaccinated against influenza
 - a. Post signs encouraging everyone to get a flu shot

Many respiratory illnesses are caused by viruses; antibiotics do not treat viral infections

Actions to prevent residents and staff:

1. When a resident is ill, talk with family member about their loved one’s illness – including symptoms and likely infectious agent (virus vs. bacteria)
 - a. The presence of bacteria in the absence of symptoms (e.g. colonization) does not require antibiotics
 - b. Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics and antibiotics cannot stop the spread of viral illnesses
2. Discuss antibiotic resistance and the importance of using antibiotics only when necessary
 - a. Inappropriate use of antibiotics contributes to antibiotic resistance and can increase the chance their loved one could acquire an infection with an antibiotic resistant organism in the future.
 - b. Display SAMM (Stop Antibiotic Misuse in Minnesota) posters in your facility
 - c. Encourage staff to wear SAMM buttons

