



Promoting Immunizations in Long-Term Care Facilities

Respiratory illnesses can easily spread in long-term care facilities due to the congregate setting and the demographics of its residents. Older adults and those who suffer from chronic health conditions can face severe consequences if they get sick from respiratory infections. Preventing the spread of respiratory viruses in nursing homes requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only vaccination, but also testing, treatment, and the implementation of proven infection prevention and control measures. The tips and resources listed offer best practices for keeping residents and staff healthy.

Provide Education & Recommendation

- Educate on the importance of vaccination and dispel common myths. Make sure educational materials are culturally appropriate and available in multiple languages. Multiple outreach methods should be considered, including print, posters, phone calls, text messages, 1:1 conversations, and resident council meetings.
- Provide education multiple times throughout the year. Consider offering information during new employee orientation, trainings, and meetings.
- Share information from credible resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health.
- Recommend vaccines to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death from respiratory viruses. Also, stress the importance of keeping up to date on routine immunizations.
- Use the presumptive approach when recommending vaccines. Incorporate motivational interviewing for people who are more hesitant to get vaccinated.
- Consider setting an ambitious vaccination target and develop activities and events to motivate and encourage vaccination.

Improve Access

- Provide free vaccines or partner with larger health organizations or pharmacies to assist with vaccination clinics.
- Utilize pharmacy and public health partners to ensure access to indicated vaccines for residents and health care personnel.
- Offer vaccine clinics during admissions, at mandatory staff trainings, departmental conferences, or other meetings.
- Schedule clinics at multiple times and locations convenient for all shifts during the flu season.

Lead by Example

- Vaccinate members of leadership teams (e.g. medical director, managers) in front of staff.
- Encourage employees to set an example; remind them that their action and recommendation carries a lot of weight in others' decisions to get vaccinated.
- Recruit vaccine ambassadors from among residents and staff (e.g., managers, department heads, supervisors)
- Remind unvaccinated employees with e-mail, letters, encouragement from supervisors, and telephone calls.

Resources

- Viral Respiratory Pathogens Toolkit for Nursing Homes
cdc.gov/long-term-care-facilities/hcp/respiratory-virus-toolkit/index.html
- COVID-19 and COVID-19 Vaccinations
cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html
- FDA—COVID-19
fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines
- Communication Resources for Health Care Providers and Staff.
cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/index.html
- CDC Vaccine Communication Resources
cdc.gov/vaccines/communication-resources.html
- Vaccine Information Sheets in Multiple Languages
immunize.org/vaccines/
- Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Health care providers usually file this report, but patients can do it as well. Visit the [VAERS website](https://vaers.hhs.gov/) or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions; VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*
- Adults who are uninsured or underinsured may be eligible to receive vaccines through the 317-Funded Adult Program. For a list of providers, visit nj.gov/health/vaccines/programs/vfc/vfc-317-vaccine-locations/