



Christmas is the time for giving – but not infections!



Prevention of Infectious Illnesses

Respiratory infections are common in adult social care settings and amongst older adults, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Older people and those with chronic illnesses are particularly at risk of developing more severe illness and complications from certain infectious diseases. The risk from many of these diseases, such as COVID-19, flu, pneumococcal infection, RSV and shingles, can be significantly reduced through vaccination. It is therefore important that eligible residents as well as older adults living in their own homes, are given the opportunity to protect themselves through vaccination. This also reduces the likelihood of outbreaks in a care home. Cold weather can also put people at greater risk of ill-health because it increases the probability of complications from existing disease, and of injury due to falls.

We have started to see an increase in respiratory illnesses in the past couple of weeks with a higher than usual attendance at Emergency Departments and Urgent Treatment Centres. If you are concerned about someone that you visit in their own home, you can get advice from their GP or 111.

Care homes can also contact **CAS for Care homes on 0300 1234 868 (Option 1)**.

Here are some small steps, settings and domiciliary care workers can take to minimise the spread of respiratory illnesses and other infections this winter:

- **Hand hygiene** – hand hygiene between tasks and between service users with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub. Please note, alcohol-based hand gel is not effective at killing the germs that cause norovirus and, in these cases, should not be used.
- **Promote respiratory etiquette and cough hygiene** – covering the nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing can reduce the spread of infections.
- **Cleaning** – Cleaning of shared equipment, especially after use. Enhanced cleaning should be introduced when there is an outbreak, to reduce further transmission.

- **Ventilation** – Introducing fresh air into indoor spaces can help dilute air that contains virus particles and reduce the spread of respiratory infections. During the colder months, it is a good idea to open windows when rooms are unoccupied.
- **PPE** – Appropriate use of personal protective equipment. More information about PPE requirements when caring for someone with suspected or confirmed acute respiratory infection can be found [here](#).
- **Waste** – Correct handling and segregation of waste and infectious linen.
- **Vaccinations** – COVID-19 vaccines are also available for health and social care workers to protect staff from serious disease and social care services from staff absences over winter. Frontline social care workers, including both clinical and non-clinical staff who have contact with people with care and support needs, should also be made aware of the flu vaccination offer, when available, by their employer. For more information on vaccinations within Lincolnshire, including eligibility and availability, please see further information below and the [NHS Grab a Jab](#).
- **Care home resident transfer forms** – Please ensure that when transferring a resident to a different setting, you use a transfer form which details the current infection risk for the resident. This will allow the receiving organisation to take appropriate measures when receiving someone into their care. An example of this form can be found in the Outbreak Information Resource Pack on our [website](#) in appendix 8.



Further information

You can still book into any of the flu vaccination clinics that have been organised by LCC and the Vaccination Team by calling the **booking line on 01522 301980** between 10am - 4pm. See below for details regarding

locations:





Locations	Dates
Sleaford Area Office	Thursday 12 th December Monday 23 rd December
Lincoln County Offices	Tuesday 17 th December Monday 23 rd December

If you would like to speak to a nurse regarding vaccine uptake for staff in your setting or vaccine hesitancy, please contact the Health Protection Team who can support you with these conversations. We encourage managers in care homes to keep up to date lists of vaccinations completed for residents, including those who are eligible for RSV. It is also helpful to keep a record of staff vaccinations too.

If you require any further information regarding the contents of this bulletin, please contact the Health Protection Team on 01522 552 993 or email healthprotectionteam@lincolnshire.go.uk.

Health Protection Team Service Hours over Christmas



Service operating as usual	Service closed	Out of Hours Contact and notifiable diseases
23 rd , 24 th , 27 th , 30 th 31 st December 2024 02 nd , 03 rd January 2025 08:00am - 17:00pm	Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day Closed.	UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) 0344 2254 524 (option 1) or email empht@ukhsa.gov.uk