

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold. Those who are older than 65, have underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, and diabetes, are particularly at risk.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION OF COVID-19 INTO YOUR FACILITY

Long-term care centers should take everyday preventive measures to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

- Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors not to visit if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Assess residents' symptoms of respiratory infection upon admission to the facility and implement appropriate infection prevention practices for incoming symptomatic residents.

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 WITHIN YOUR FACILITY

- Keep residents and employees informed.
- Monitor residents and employees for fever or respiratory symptoms.
- Support hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as cough etiquette by residents, visitors, and employees.
- Identify dedicated employees to care for COVID-19 patients and provide infection control training.
- Provide the right supplies to ensure easy and correct use of PPE.
- Report any possible COVID-19 illness in residents and employees to the local health department, including your state HAI/AR coordinator.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 guidance for long-term care facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>
- CDC COVID-19 print materials (posters and fact sheets in English, Spanish, and Chinese): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- CDC health promotion materials (handwashing posters): <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>