

How to identify respiratory outbreaks and what to do next



1 IDENTIFY respiratory outbreaks

= 3 or more residents/staff ill with influenza-like illness* within 3 days

*Sudden onset of symptoms: cough (new or worsening), sore throat, or shortness of breath AND fever, malaise, headache or myalgia

2 IMPLEMENT infection control measures

- separate symptomatic residents in single rooms
- use masks, gloves and gowns for symptomatic resident care
- wash hands/use hand rubs before and after resident care
- reinforce respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette across the facility
- place warning signage at entrance to facility and affected rooms

3 NOTIFY your local public health unit (PHU) – 1300 066 055

- inform staff and limit their movement in affected areas
- alert visiting GPs and family contacts

4 DEFER group activities where possible

5 DOCUMENT the outbreak

- check the vaccination status of residents and staff
- keep a daily list of suspected cases in residents and in staff

6 TEST cases to confirm the cause

Ask your GPs to order both viral and bacterial swabs

7 TREATMENT and prophylaxis with antiviral medications should be discussed with GPs and the PHU

8 CONTINUE infection control measures during the outbreak

- exclude ill staff, minimise resident transfers
- cohort confirmed flu cases if single rooms not available
- instruct cleaning staff regarding extra cleaning

9 MONITOR the outbreak

Look for new cases and provide daily updates to your PHU

10 DECLARE outbreak over

If no new cases within 8 days from the onset of symptoms in the last resident case

FURTHER INFORMATION

See the NSW Health *FLU-INFO KIT* for residential care facilities:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/flu-info-kit.aspx