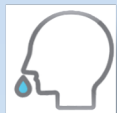




### Swabs

- Residents with viral respiratory symptoms and a negative COVID antigen test should be swabbed for both COVID-19 and influenza.
- Let Public Health know if you suspect there is an outbreak of a viral respiratory infection.

Department of Public Health –  
HSE Dublin and Midlands



### Awaiting swab results

- Antivirals to prevent and treat influenza are an important, evidence-based component of controlling outbreaks in RCFs. Decisions regarding prescribing antivirals for ill residents are made by the resident's GP with support, if needed, from Public Health.
- Isolate suspected cases in **single rooms** - use PPE appropriate for suspected COVID-19 or flu cases. Patients may have influenza and/or COVID-19.
- Identify close contacts of suspected flu and be vigilant for new onset of symptoms (no need to identify close contacts of COVID).



### Confirmation of influenza outbreak (with no concurrent COVID-19 outbreak)

- Liaise with each resident's GP and consider starting chemoprophylaxis as soon as possible for asymptomatic residents who are at extremely high risk for hospitalisation if they were to develop seasonal influenza and who are contacts of a confirmed case.
- Give information about influenza, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to residents and visitors where appropriate.
- Implement local outbreak management plan: dedicated staff team to units, enhanced cleaning and disinfection and increase surveillance of infection.



### Staff

- The flu and COVID-19 vaccines are the best way for staff to protect themselves, their loved ones and their patients from these viruses.
- Staff with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should be excluded for 5 days from date of onset of symptoms from the facility and have fully recovered. Occupational health guidelines for any diagnosed pathogen should be followed.
- Ideally only vaccinated staff should care for patients with flu symptoms. Staff - talk to your own GP about whether you need chemoprophylaxis.



### Medical reviews and transfers

- If contacting the GP, the out of hours GP service, or other healthcare services, inform them that there is a suspected/confirmed outbreak.
- If transferring a resident to hospital make sure that Ambulance Control / Emergency Department / Outpatients and the Hospital Infection Control team (or Nursing Admin) are advised that there is a suspected/confirmed outbreak in your RCF.



### Visitors

- Raise awareness and ask them not to visit if they have symptoms of a respiratory virus.
- Give information about COVID-19 and flu, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Place signs at all entrances to your RCF to inform visitors that there is an outbreak of a respiratory virus.
- All visitors should wear a mask.
- Visitors in "at risk" groups for flu should be informed about the outbreak so they can make an informed choice about whether to visit.
- Exclude all children or anyone with ILI symptoms regardless of age.



### Resumption of Services

- It is generally appropriate for the unit to resume normal operations after 7 days from the onset of symptoms in the most recent case in a COVID-19 outbreak and after 8 days in a flu outbreak.