

Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)

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A new respiratory disease – coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) – is spreading globally and there have been instances of COVID-19 community spread in the United States. The general strategies CDC recommends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in LTCF are the same strategies these facilities use every day to detect and prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses like influenza.

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about the coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). KDHE is working with multiple state agencies including the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) in the public health response to COVID-19. KDHE will update this interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

Prevent the introduction of respiratory germs INTO your facility

- 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 resident's symptoms of respiratory infection upon admission to the facility and implement appropriate infection prevention practices for incoming symptomatic residents.

Prevent the spread of respiratory germs WITHIN your facility

- Keep residents and employees informed.
 - Describe what actions the facility is taking to protect them, including answering their questions and explaining what they can do to protect themselves and their fellow residents.
- Monitor residents and employees for fever or respiratory symptoms.
 - Restrict residents with fever or acute respiratory symptoms to their room. If they must leave the room for medically necessary procedures, have them wear a facemask (if tolerated).
 - In general, for care of residents with undiagnosed respiratory infection use Standard, Contact, and Droplet Precautions with eye protection unless suspected diagnosis requires Airborne Precautions (e.g., tuberculosis).
 - Healthcare personnel should monitor their local and state public health sources to understand COVID-19 activity in their community to help inform their evaluation of individuals with unknown respiratory illness. If there is

transmission of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to implementing the precautions described above for residents with acute respiratory infection, facilities should also consult with public health authorities for additional guidance.

- Support hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as cough etiquette by residents, visitors, and employees.
 - Ensure employees clean their hands according to [CDC guidelines](#), including before and after contact with residents, after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment, and after removing personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Put alcohol-based hand rub in every resident room (ideally both inside and outside of the room).
 - Make sure tissues are available and any sink is well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
- Identify dedicated employees to care for COVID-19 patients and provide infection control training.
 - Guidance on implementing recommended infection prevention practices is available in CDC's free online course — [The Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training](#) — which includes resources checklists for facilities and employees to use.
- Provide the right supplies to ensure easy and correct use of PPE.
 - Post [signs](#) on the door or wall outside of the resident room that clearly describe the type of precautions needed and required PPE.
 - Make PPE, including facemasks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves, available immediately outside of the resident room.
 - Position a trash can near the exit inside any resident room to make it easy for employees to discard PPE.

Prevent the spread of respiratory germs BETWEEN facilities

- Notify facilities prior to transferring a resident with an acute respiratory illness, including suspected or confirmed COVID-19, to a higher level of care.
- Report any possible COVID-19 illness in residents and employees to the local health department, including your state HAI/AR coordinator.

Please check the [CDC website](#) and the [KDHE website](#) periodically for updated guidance.

