



ARE YOU READY?

Outbreak preparedness checklist

Aged care providers must take all possible steps to prepare for and manage outbreaks of acute respiratory infections (ARIs), including COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). This checklist provides a list of key steps for aged care providers and staff to prepare for and respond to an ARI outbreak.

Please note that this checklist is for guidance only.

Guidance such as the [National Guideline for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of Outbreaks of Acute Respiratory Infection in Residential Aged Care Homes](#) (CDNA ARI Guideline) and [The Aged Care Infection Prevention and Control Guide](#), support the planning, preparing, detecting and managing cases, contacts and outbreaks of ARIs.



Is your Outbreak Management Plan (OMP) up to date and ready to activate?



- Has your (OMP) been tested through a series of scenario-based activities?
- Are staff aware of the OMP, how to access it, their roles and responsibilities and who will be the lead in managing the outbreak?
- Does your OMP include an updated facility risk assessment and analysis of how an outbreak may impact the delivery of quality care and services?



Do you have arrangements in place to access vaccinations and antiviral treatments?



- Do you promote and facilitate vaccinations among eligible residents? GPs and pharmacists are able to administer vaccinations.
- Do you have established pathways with GPs and pharmacies to rapidly access and administer vaccinations and antiviral treatments?
- Have you considered organising a vaccination clinic?
 - Contact your [Public Health Network](#) for assistance or [email](#) us for more information about accessing vaccination services
 - Where primary care options aren't available, additional support can be provided through the [Vaccine Administration Partners Program \(VAPP\)](#). [Email us](#) if you have any questions about the VAPP.
- Do you have a process for monitoring and recording vaccination consent and status of residents?
- Have you engaged with General Practitioners (GPs) to assess suitability for antiviral treatment (for COVID-19 and influenza)?



Do you have an up-to-date workforce management plan?



- Does your facility risk assessment take into account impacts to your workforce during an ARI outbreak?
- Do you have up-to-date contact information for all staff and recruitment agency(ies)?
- Do you have a relationship with a recruitment agency(ies) or are you able to source staff from another home within the approved providers scope?
- Have you identified essential staff (IPC Lead and management) and have back-up staff been trained if essential staff are unavailable or unable to work?
- Do you know who you contact to [source additional or surge workforce](#)?



Are you regularly reviewing infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance?



- Are you up to date with national and state and territory IPC guidance and advice?
- Have staff been trained in IPC practices and outbreak response activities including refresher IPC training and identification of ARI symptoms?
- Is your IPC Lead involved in outbreak management and training?
- Are you routinely assessing and/or testing residents for ARI symptoms and documenting as required?
- Have you considered where and how residents and staff can be effectively cohorted according to risk in an outbreak?



Outbreak monitoring and recognition



- Do you or your team monitor [COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care homes](#) and local news and media reports for information on local outbreaks in the community?
- Do you regularly undertake IPC risk assessments?
- Do you document changes in residents' behaviour or health?
- Are staff trained to recognise early signs and symptoms of ARI?
- If required, do you routinely monitor residents for ARI symptoms and test, via rapid antigen tests (RAT) or PCR?
- Does your OMP include continuity of care (e.g. visits from GPs, nurse practitioners and allied health workforce) during an outbreak?



Do you have visitor screening and arrangements in place?



- Have you assessed the risk, as part of your OMP, to determine if clinically assessing and screening visitors before entry to your home is required?
- Are you prepared to manage visitors safely during in ARI outbreak? The [Code](#) provides details on clear guidance to support visits during an outbreak.
- Can your current screening arrangements cope with high visitor numbers?
- Do you have an area for visitors to wait for RAT results?
- Do you have visitation arrangements in place for essential visitors, partners in care or volunteers that can be sustained during an outbreak?



Do you have arrangements in place to continue to deliver quality care and services during an outbreak?



- Are you taking a proportionate approach to how you balance safety versus the risk that isolation poses to residents' physical, social and emotional wellbeing?
- Have you documented decisions made by the home and the resident?
- Do you know who will make decisions for continued care and services during an outbreak?
- Is your leadership and IPC Lead visible, proactive, involved in planning and responsive to outbreak management?
- Do you have sufficient workforce to continue the delivery of quality care and services?



Equipment, stock levels and medical supplies



- Do you have a stock monitoring system in place? Does it include monitoring expiry dates of stock including PPE, RATs, hand hygiene products, nose and throat swabs, cleaning supplies, bins and bin liners?
- Do you have methods in place to replace or increase supplies during an ARI outbreak?
- Do you have sufficient storage for large stock orders?



Communication



- Does your OMP include an outbreak communication strategy?
- Do you have a plan for communicating with staff, residents, volunteers, family members and other service providers (e.g. cleaners, kitchen staff) about the outbreak, including notifying them when the outbreak is over?
- Are contact details for staff, residents, volunteers, family members and other service providers (e.g. state/territory health departments, facility GPs, nurse practitioners, infection control consultants) up-to-date and easily accessible?



Cleaning and waste management



- Does your OMP identify who to contact for additional cleaning and waste management requirements?
- Does your OMP identify who is responsible for overseeing increased frequency of cleaning and waste disposal, liaison with contractors or hiring extra cleaners as necessary?
- Do you have contact information for more than one waste management company?