



Health Advisory

Health Advisory for Congregate Living Facilities

December 21, 2018

Influenza Activity Increasing Locally

Current Situation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports widespread influenza activity in California. Monterey County Health Department has received several reports of influenza outbreaks in healthcare facilities, particularly in long-term care facilities (LTCFs). The symptoms of influenza include fever (usually above 100° F), dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Fever is typically not associated with the common cold and therefore is an important symptom to consider when distinguishing between a cold and influenza. Some people with influenza have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. Some people, such as the elderly, may have atypical clinical presentations.

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. It takes about 1 to 4 days after being exposed to the virus to develop symptoms. People may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick.

Recommendations for Long-Term Care Facilities

- **Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently.** An Environmental Protection Agency-approved disinfectant or a freshly prepared sodium hypochlorite solution (e.g., household chlorine bleach in a 1:100 {500ppm} to 1:10 {5,000ppm} dilution) may be used.
- **Encourage good hand hygiene** among residents and staff. Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water. Keep hands away from the mouth, eyes, and nose.
- **Promote influenza vaccination.** It is not too late to vaccinate. Administer the current season's influenza vaccine to unvaccinated residents and staff.
- **Have symptomatic residents stay in their own rooms** as much as possible, including restricting them from group activities and have their meals served in their rooms when possible.
- **Exclude ill staff who have fever** until they have been afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reduction medications (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen).
- **Report suspected outbreaks** of influenza and/or influenza-like illness to the San Benito County Public Health Services (831) 637-5367.

For additional information about influenza, please visit the CDC's website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>

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