
Respiratory Illness (Common Cold) in Long Term Care Home

The common cold is a respiratory (nose, throat, lung) illness caused by a virus. There are many different kinds of viruses that can cause respiratory illness such as rhinovirus, enterovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, coronavirus and parainfluenza (see reverse side for more information).

Young children, the elderly and people with chronic health conditions are more likely to have complications from respiratory illness. This type of illness spreads easily and can cause outbreaks in crowded places such as long term care homes, hospitals and schools.

Respiratory viruses are spread when:

- A person talks, coughs or sneezes.
- A person touches hands, surfaces or objects that have the germs on them and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

Signs and Symptoms

- Cough, fever, chills, runny nose, sore throat, hoarse voice or stuffy nose.
- Range from mild to severe, depending on the virus.
- Usually last anywhere from 3 days to a few weeks depending on the virus.

Prevent the Spread of Illness

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly and use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash your hands.
- Cough into your sleeve or a tissue and then throw it away.
- Stay home and away from others if you are feeling sick.
- Clean surfaces that are touched often (ie door handles, railings, light switches, children's toys).
- Do not visit family members or friends at a hospital or health care homes if you have a cough, cold or a fever.

In Long Term Care

All residents with respiratory illness are placed on precautions. This means that staff and visitors wear a gown, gloves and facial protection when they are in contact with the resident or items in the resident's room. All residents with respiratory illness should remain in their rooms. If residents must leave their rooms, they must clean their hands and wear a mask to prevent the spread of illness to others.

Common Cold Viruses	Signs and Symptoms
Adenovirus	Cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever. Can lead to pneumonia, bronchitis.
Coronavirus	Cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat. Usually mild to moderate and of short duration. Can lead to pneumonia.
Enterovirus or Rhinovirus	Cough, runny nose, sneezing, fever (low grade), hoarse voice, sore throat, nasal congestion, headache, body aches. Can lead to pneumonia.
Parainfluenza virus	Cough, fever (may be high), nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, hoarse voice. Can be more severe in the elderly.
Respiratory syncytial virus	Cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, hoarse voice, nasal congestion. Can lead to pneumonia or bronchiolitis.

Adapted from SHA-REGINA CDC

For more information contact your doctor, the Provincial HealthLine at **811**,
or Population and Public Health at **306-655-4612**
