

Health Advisory: Influenza Outbreaks at Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF)

January 15, 2013

Dear Kitsap County Long Term Care Providers:

Please be aware of significant widespread influenza activity in Kitsap County.

The following action is requested:

- Suspect influenza in residents of LTCF with acute illness.
- Test LTCF patients with influenza-like symptoms (cough, headache, fever) early in their illness (ideally within the first 48 hours); in elderly patients influenza symptoms may be atypical or mild with low-grade or no fever.
- All LTCF residents who have confirmed or suspected influenza should receive antiviral treatment immediately.
 - Do not wait for laboratory confirmation of influenza.
 - Treat regardless of results of rapid influenza tests because they lack sensitivity and may be falsely negative.
- Report to Kitsap Public Health District promptly if:
 - Influenza is diagnosed in at least one resident, OR
 - More than one resident in the facility develops influenza-like illness during a 1-week period.
- Follow CDC guidance for influenza outbreak management and antiviral chemoprophylaxis in LTCFs (see link on following page).
- Restrict staff with influenza-like illness to home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Ensure residents and all LTCF staff have received influenza vaccine.

Recommendations

Antiviral medications must be administered quickly to ill persons to provide optimal clinical benefit (treatment) and to uninfected persons to effectively stop an outbreak (chemoprophylaxis). For outbreak control purposes, consider having orders for antiviral chemoprophylaxis prepared in advance. Do not rely on rapid influenza tests to guide treatment or prophylaxis during an outbreak because these tests can sometimes be falsely negative. For more information on use of antiviral medications in institutional settings, see links on following page.

Resources

- CDC interim guidance for influenza management in LCTFs
www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm

Contact us

- For questions or more information contact:
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- To update your contact information with the Health District contact Ruth Westergaard
at 360-337-5752 or ruth.westergaard@kitsappublichealth.org.

This message will be posted on the Healthcare Provider page on our website.

Sincerely,

Scott

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