Interior Health
For your whole life

RESPIRATORY ILLNESS
FAQ

What is Respiratory Illness?

Respiratory Illness (RI) is generally caused by viruses and bacteria.

How do people get Respiratory Illness?

Respiratory infections are spread through droplets containing the virus or bacteria when someone coughs or sneezes and these droplets come in direct contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth, nose, or airway of another person. These micro organisms can live on surfaces (such as countertops or doorknobs) and on hands and clothing, so it can easily be spread when a person touches something contaminated. Remember to wash your hands frequently!
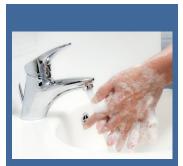
What are the symptoms of Respiratory Illness?

Symptoms include new or worsening cough and fever. Other symptoms may include weakness, runny nose, sore throat or headache.

How does a RI Outbreak impact your ill family member?

- Signs will be posted at the entrance of the building or unit identifying an Outbreak.

- Activities and outings may be cancelled.

- Gowns, gloves & masks may be worn by staff when caring for your family member.

- To prevent the illness from spreading, your family member may:

    - be encouraged to stay in their room, receive their meals in their room or be asked to sit at a separate table

    - be transferred to the hospital if they require additional treatment

    - need to reschedule non-urgent medical appointments

- Residents who are NOT ill may attend other facilities for medically necessary activities (e.g. Cancer Agency, specialist appointments)

If you have any questions that were not answered here, please ask a nurse on your ward, or ask to speak with a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Always clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub, particularly after going to the toilet and before eating food.

For more info, visit:

www.interiorhealth.ca