



INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL RESOURCES

FOR YORK REGION RETIREMENT HOMES

SEPTEMBER 2019

PUBLIC HEALTH
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york.ca

York Region

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An electronic version of this document is available on york.ca/infectionprevention, under 'Infection Prevention Resources'.

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Introduction

The *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* requires every licensed retirement home in Ontario to have an infection prevention and control program in place that meets the requirements stated in *Ontario Regulation 166/11* (The Regulation). A comprehensive infection prevention and control program that is properly implemented can help prevent the transmission and spread of illness in the retirement home.

This document contains information and resources to assist York Region retirement homes in meeting these requirements. Please refer to the document "[Guideline: Infection Prevention & Control](#)" published by Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, for explanation of The Regulations pertaining to infection prevention and control.

Public Health Inspections

Public health inspectors conduct food safety inspections at any retirement home that has 10 or more residents, and if applicable, inspections of pools and personal service settings, such as hair salons. Public health inspectors also conduct inspections when an outbreak has been declared in a retirement home, as well as investigate complaints that could be related to a health hazard. The focus of an inspection can include any of the following areas:

- Cleaning and disinfection practices
- General maintenance and sanitation
- Hand hygiene, routine practices and additional precautions (including use of personal protective equipment)
- Outbreak response and implementation of control measures
- Policies and procedures review

To contact your area public health inspector, call York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or email: health.inspectors@york.ca

Infectious Diseases and Prevention Reports



York Region public health conducts ongoing epidemiological surveillance on infectious diseases. The following reports can be obtained online by visiting york.ca and typing 'infectious disease and prevention reports' into the search field. Examples of reports available are: [Reportable Diseases in York Region 2000-2015](#); [Reportable Diseases in York Region 2016](#); [Reportable Diseases Summary – Monthly Report](#); and [Influenza Season Summary](#).

Policy Review

A vital component of any infection prevention and control program is to have accurate policies available to staff to ensure they can obtain direction on infection prevention and outbreak management at any time. Each retirement home should develop, implement, and review internal policies and procedures. This includes a review of general infection prevention and control policies, as well as outbreak prevention and management procedures.

If you require assistance in reviewing your policies, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or email health.inspectors@york.ca

Outbreak Surveillance & Management

According to current regulation in place, every retirement home is required to have a surveillance protocol that sets out how the home will identify, document and monitor residents who report symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal illness. In addition, written procedures have to be established to ensure infectious diseases outbreaks and/or any increases in the number of residents with symptoms are reported to York Region public health.



An outbreak may occur when an increased number of residents and/or staff experience similar symptoms, such as diarrhea and vomiting. Early reporting of a suspect outbreak, as well as practicing proper infection prevention and control measures, will decrease the number of residents and/or staff who become ill and reduce the duration of an outbreak.

When to Suspect an Outbreak

Respiratory infection outbreak:

- Two cases of acute respiratory infection occurring within 48 hours with any common epidemiological link (e.g., unit, floor, same caregiver); **OR**
- one laboratory-confirmed case of influenza

Enteric infection outbreak:

- Two or more cases meeting the case definition with a common epidemiological link (e.g. specific unit or floor, same caregiver) with initial onset within a 48 hour period.
 - Suspect Outbreak Definition: If an outbreak is suspected, notify the local board of health to support with the investigation and management.

Reporting an Outbreak

If you suspect there is an outbreak at your retirement home, notify York Region public health, **Infectious Diseases Control Division** immediately.

- Call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588, Monday to Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- After hours, including weekends and holidays, call 905-953-6478

Outbreak management meeting

Once an outbreak has been declared in your facility, an outbreak management meeting will be conducted with the primary public health investigator, public health inspector, and facility staff. Participants may include the wellness manager, administrator, nursing staff, environmental staff and dietary staff.

Line listing & daily reporting during an outbreak

Effective management of outbreaks requires retirement homes to share the most up to date information of symptomatic residents and staff with the public health investigator. The facility should fax the line list to 905-660-4889 each weekday by noon. If there is any delay, please contact your public health investigator.

Outbreak guidelines & resources by York Region public health

Visit york.ca/outbreakmanagement for resources including:

- [Daily cleaning checklist for ill resident rooms during an outbreak](#)
- [Enteric outbreak line listing – residents](#) or [staff](#)
- [General test requisition](#) – how to complete this form during outbreak
- [Outbreak control measures checklist for facilities](#)
- [Respiratory outbreak line listing – residents](#) or [staff](#)
- [Contact, Droplet, and Droplet/Contact Precaution signs](#)

Additional resources are available on **Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care** website (health.gov.on.ca)

- [Recommendations for control of respiratory infection outbreaks in long-term care homes](#), March 2018
- [Recommendations for the control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in long-term care homes](#), March 2018

Education and Training

In accordance with The Regulation, retirement home licensees are required to provide education and training for residents, their substitute decision-maker(s), staff and volunteers on how to prevent transmission and spread of illness. Resources are available on the York Region website to help retirement homes achieve this requirement.

Visit york.ca/infectionprevention and click on “Infection Prevention Education”, then choose “Infection Prevention Resources” for resources such as:

- [Correct hand washing procedures sign](#)
- [Hand sanitizer sign](#)
- [Proper cleaning & disinfecting practices poster](#)



Additional resources are available on the **Public Health Ontario** website (publichealthontario.ca), including:

- [PIDAC Documents*](#)

Public Health Ontario (PHO) best practice documents are intended for use by health care workers in hospitals, long-term care facilities and community-based health care organizations, however, they can also give direction to retirement homes. Below are the suggested documents you should be familiar with.

*These documents are updated regularly. For the most current version, visit the PHO website.

- [Best practices for hand hygiene](#), 4th Edition, April 2014
- [Best practices for surveillance of health care-associated infections](#), 3rd Edition, July 2014

- [Best practices for environmental cleaning for prevention and control of infections in all health care settings](#), 3rd Edition, April 2018
- [Best practices for infection prevention and control programs in Ontario in all health care settings](#), 3rd Edition, May 2012
- [Routine practices and additional precautions in all health care settings](#), 3rd Edition, November 2012
 - [Additional precautions signage and lanyard cards](#)
 - [Annex A: Screening, testing and surveillance for antibiotic-resistant organisms \(AROs\) in all health care settings](#), February 2013
 - [Annex B: Best practices for prevention of transmission of acute respiratory infection in all health care settings](#), March 2013
 - [Annex C: Testing, surveillance and management of Clostridium Difficile in all health care settings](#), January 2013
- [Just Clean Your Hands \(JCYH\) Program](#)
This program was developed to help reduce health care-associated infections and the spread of infection by providing focused education and tools for promotion, evaluation and auditing to health care providers in long-term care and retirement homes.
- [Environmental Cleaning Toolkit](#)
This toolkit supports the PIDAC document 'Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections' and is designed to assist environmental services managers and infection control professionals in providing training to staff on effective procedures for environmental cleaning.

Influenza

Encourage staff, residents and visitors to protect themselves by learning about the spread of influenza and getting a flu shot. Visit york.ca/flu for more information on:

- Information about the flu and flu vaccine
- How to set up a flu shot clinic in the workplace
- List of flu shot clinic locations

Additional resources are available on:

Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care website
(health.gov.on.ca)

- [Let's Get Fluless](#)

This website provides messaging to encourage flu shot uptake among health care workers in hospitals and long-term care facilities in Ontario (appropriate for retirement homes).

Public Health Ontario website (publichealthontario.ca)

- [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#)

Posted every Friday during influenza season (November to May), these weekly reports include information on influenza activity in Ontario, case counts for new and total influenza cases (broken down by health unit), information on institutional outbreaks, dominant circulating respiratory viruses, archived bulletins and reports.



Influenza: Vaccine Storage and Handling

If your retirement home has been approved for the 2019-2020 Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) you will require a cold chain inspection by York Region Public Health staff.

Once you have passed your cold chain inspection, each time you place your influenza vaccine orders, you will be required to submit a temperature log with at least five (5) consecutive business days' temperature readings that shows your vaccine refrigerator is working within the acceptable range of +2° to +8° Celsius.

If the vaccine refrigerator temperatures go outside the range of +2° to +8° Celsius, you must contact York Region Public Health staff immediately at 1-877-464-9675, ext. 74065.

Unused influenza vaccine from the previous 2018/2019 UIIP are to be returned to York Region Public Health.

Vaccine storage and handling is up to the individual retirement home to manage.

Visit york.ca/vaccineinventory/ for the most up-to-date notices, vaccine order forms, video, print resources, and other requirements to remain in compliance with the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care's Vaccine Storage and Handling Protocol.

Additional resources are available on **Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care** website, including:

- [Universal Influenza Immunization Program \(UIIP\)](#)
- [Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines](#), May 2012
- [Vaccine Storage and Handling Protocol](#), January 2018
- [Vaccine Temperature Log Book](#)

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

Retirement home licensees are required by The Regulation that each resident is screened for tuberculosis within 14 days of commencing residency in the home, unless the resident has been screened not more than 90 days before commencing residency and the documented results of the screening are available to the licensee. In addition, staff have to be screened for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. Please visit york.ca/tb for resources and services offered by York Region's TB Program.

Some resources that can be accessed on our website include:

- Active TB screening checklist for clinicians
- Recommendations for TB screening for retirement homes residents
- Frequently asked questions about TB screening for residents of long-term care and retirement homes

You can also call the TB Information Line at 1-877-464-9675, ext.76000 or email TB@york.ca



Food Safety



YorkSafe Food Handler Certification

In accordance with The Regulation, licensees are required to ensure that whenever food is prepared in the retirement home, at least one person involved in preparing the food holds a current certificate in food handling.

In addition, the *Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17* requires all food service premises to have at least one certified food handler at all times while open.

Visit york.ca/foodsafety for more details including our online registration process.

Food Recalls

York Region uses the Urgent Public Health Notification System to provide premises including retirement homes in York Region with urgent health information in a timely manner regarding food recalls, drinking water advisories, health advisories, heat alerts and other important public health issues.

When a food recall alert is initiated by York Region public health, you will receive notification either through email or telephone. We ask that you respond to these notifications through one of the methods as quickly as possible. Your response to the questions will help us determine what actions, if necessary, should be taken and to gauge the effectiveness of the recall.

For more information and to sign up for *Food Recall and Allergen Alerts*, visit CFIA's website at inspection.gc.ca

Disclosure

In order to help the public to make informed decisions to protect their health, routine and complaint inspection reports of York Region establishments including food premises, pools, whirlpools, wading pools, splash pads, small drinking water systems, personal service settings and child care settings, are publicly disclosed online at york.ca/yorksafe

Extreme Weather Conditions

Retirement home licensees are required to ensure that there are procedures in place for responding to extreme heat and cold weather conditions. York Region public health notifies the public during extreme temperature events that may impact health (such as heat warnings and extreme cold weather) through media releases and social media.

Stakeholders whose clientele may be more vulnerable to extreme heat, such as retirement homes, are also directly notified by email when a heat warning or extended heat warning has been issued for York Region. Extra precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of illness that may be experienced by older adults



during hot and humid weather. This may include more frequent checks and encouraging clientele to stay cool and hydrated.

For additional resources, please visit york.ca/extremeheat and york.ca/extremecold

Pets Residing In or Visiting a Retirement Home

Retirement homes may have pets residing on site or pet visitation programs that provide opportunities for residents to interact with animals. Some retirement homes may also allow residents to own a pet. While the animal-human interactions provide benefits such as companionship and comfort to residents, animals can pose a risk of infectious diseases transmission, such as rabies. Retirement homes should develop a written policy that includes the following areas:



- Type of animals permitted as resident pets or in the pet visitation program
- Care of pets residing in the retirement home
- Location and care of pet dwellings in the retirement home
- Interaction of pets with residents, including supervision and hand hygiene requirements
- Vaccination requirements and records keeping
- Procedure to report animal bites and scratches

The following resources are available to assist retirement home licensees to mitigate the risk of transmitting infectious diseases from animals to residents and provide guidance on what should be covered in policies related to pets.

- [Guidelines for pet in facilities – long term care and retirement homes](#)
- [Pet care – cage and crate cleaning poster for facilities](#)

In the event that a resident or staff is exposed to the saliva of an animal through a bite, or is scratched or licked on an area of broken skin, the incident must to be reported directly to York Region public health for the appropriate follow-up. Call 1-800-361-5653.

To help reduce the incidence of rabies, low-cost rabies clinics for dogs and cats are promoted throughout York Region. Dates and locations of rabies clinics can be found on the [York Region Events Calendar](#).

For any infection prevention and control inquiries, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or email health.inspectors@york.ca

