

Infection Prevention Team Newsletter September 2024

Acute Respiratory Infections and Vaccinations

As the weather gets colder and people spend more time indoors, we see a rise in acute respiratory infections caused by viruses such as Flu, Covid and RSV amongst others. Whilst for healthy adults these are usually unpleasant but minor infections which will get better on their own, for elderly people, young babies and those with a weakened immune system these can be very serious, leading to hospital admissions, serious side effects and even death.

For the first time this year there is a vaccine on offer to protect our most vulnerable residents from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) alongside the vaccinations for flu and covid. RSV vaccination will be offered to those aged 75-79 years and pregnant women from 1st September.

All respiratory viruses are very easily passed on from one person to another both via breathing in small airborne droplets and also from surfaces and via unwashed hands and equipment.

Key Vaccine messages:

RSV vaccine will be offered to eligible residents from 1st September.

Flu and Covid vaccinations for both residents and staff are available from early October.

Staff can get their free flu jab by attending any of the participating pharmacies or their GP surgery.

Key outbreak messages:

Make sure you have a supply of covid LFD tests available (from the pharmacy) for testing residents who would be eligible for treatment.

The first 5 symptomatic residents should be tested (unless specific additional testing is requested by UKHSA or the IPC team)

The LFD test is only for Covid. If this is negative, then please contact the IPC team (via the email address below) or UKHSA (out of hours) for advice. Testing for Flu or other infections may need to be arranged.

Please help prevent outbreaks by having your vaccinations- these are safe, effective and really do save lives.

[National flu immunisation programme plan 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-flu-immunisation-programme-plan-2024-to-2025)

[Covid Guidance for Care Homes](#)

LINKS: [IPC Policies and Procedures](#) (Follow and scroll down)

We are always here to help- email us at IPC@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk