

Influenza Outbreak Action Plan

- 1** Care home residents are at high risk from Influenza as they live at close quarters in an environment susceptible to the spread of infection. The virus can trigger other respiratory conditions such as pneumonia. Whilst the 'flu vaccine can help keep cases to a minimum it is important to be on the lookout for symptoms as the Influenza virus constantly evolves into new strains.
- 2** If two or more residents or staff members display symptoms over a 48 hour period, contact the Health Protection Unit who will work with staff and GPs to identify the cause of the outbreak.
- 3** Close the home (and any day care facility) to new admissions if the HPU confirms an outbreak.
- 4** Residents should not transfer to other homes or attend external activities.
- 5** Residents should only attend out-patient or investigation appointments where these are clinically urgent.
- 6** Care for residents with symptoms in single rooms until fully recovered and for at least 5 days after the symptoms started.
- 7** Affected residents should remain in their rooms as far as possible. Discourage residents with symptoms from using common areas.
- 8** Staff should work in separate teams: one team caring for affected residents and the other caring for unaffected residents.
- 9** Agency and temporary staff in contact with residents with symptoms should not work elsewhere (e.g. in a local acute care hospital) until the outbreak is declared over (i.e. 7 days after the onset of the last case).
- 10** Staff and visitors with symptoms should be excluded from the home until fully recovered and for at least 5 days after the onset of symptoms.
- 11** The elderly, very young and pregnant women, who are at greater risk from the complications of flu, should be discouraged from visiting during an outbreak.
- 12** Inform visiting health professionals of the outbreak and rearrange nonurgent visits to the home.
- 13** Inform the hospital in advance if a resident requires admission to hospital during the outbreak.
- 14** Ensure that Virusan handwash and disposable paper towels are available at all sinks.
- 15** Wash hands thoroughly using Virusan handwash and water before and after any contact with residents.
- 16** Provide 70% alcohol hand rub for visitor use and supplementary use by staff.

Influenza Outbreak Action Plan Cont.

- 17** Staff should wear single-use plastic aprons and gloves as appropriate when dealing with affected residents. The HPU will advise on the use of surgical masks. Dispose of all these as infectious waste.
- 18** Provide tissues and no-touch bins for used tissue disposal in public areas.
- 19** Provide tissues and covered sputum pots for affected residents. Dispose of these as infectious waste.
- 20** Wash residents' clothes, linen and soft furnishings on a regular basis, and keep all rooms clean.
- 21** Clean surfaces of lockers, tables & chairs, televisions and floors etc frequently with Virusolve+ diluted at 5%. Always clean hoists, lifting aids, baths and showers thoroughly between patients.

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