

The SPEED Preseason Implementation Checklist

Flu outbreaks in a long-term care facility can be controlled if the healthcare staff is ready with a plan that can go into action as soon as flu is detected. The SPEED Preseason Implementation checklist can help you be prepared.

Sign up for Flu Alerts

Be on the lookout for flu before it hits. As the season approaches, monitor the CDC website (<http://www.CDC.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>) weekly for news of where flu is occurring. You can also go to FluSTAR.com and sign up for flu alert emails that will let you know when flu is in your area. Another good source of flu activity can often be found on the website of your State Health Department, many of which have sentinel sites reporting on a weekly basis.

Plan for testing, treatment, and prophylaxis with adequate supplies of kits and drug

At the first sign of flu, you need to get laboratory confirmation promptly. This can be done with rapid test kits or taking nasal swabs that are sent to a laboratory for analysis. Regardless of the way you test, be ready in advance of the season with the materials you will need. In addition to test kits, plan ahead with your pharmacy provider to have a supply of antiviral medication on hand to initiate treatment and prophylaxis rapidly in the event of an outbreak.

Educate staff on importance of vaccination

While annual vaccination for residents is routine in most long-term care facilities, vaccination rates among healthcare staff are surprisingly low. So before the flu season hits, start working with the staff to ensure your facility achieves full compliance.

Encourage proper hygiene, (e.g., handwashing)

Good hygiene is essential to managing flu outbreaks (and other contagious diseases as well). Reminding staff of the importance of washing hands frequently and always after personal contact with residents cannot be overemphasized.

Develop procedural plan for flu outbreaks

Everyone agrees that you need to act fast when flu is discovered in a long-term care facility to avoid potentially serious consequences. Having a procedural plan in place that defines roles and responsibilities will allow you to take action quickly and effectively.

