



Nebraska Infection
Control Network

Outbreak Identification and Management in Long Term Care

Tammi Schaffart RN, BSN

Overview

- ▶ Definition
 - ▶ Identification
 - ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Staff
 - ▶ Summary
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What is an outbreak?

"An outbreak is a sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease. An outbreak may occur in a community or geographical area, or may affect several countries. It may last for a few days or weeks, or even for several years."

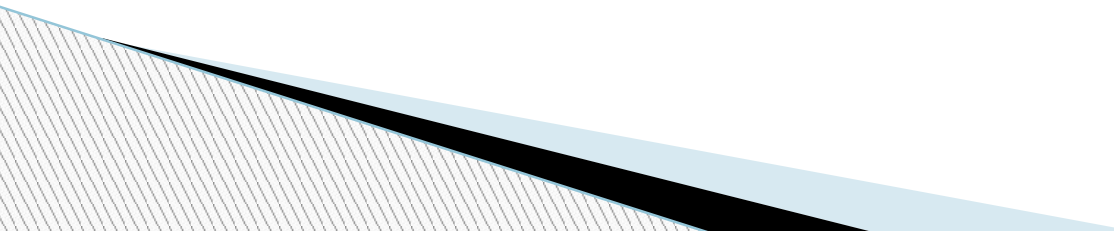
https://apic.org/Resource_/TinyMceFileManager/for_consumers/IPandYou_Bulletin_Outbreaks_Epidemics_Pandemics.pdf



Identification

- ▶ Know your baseline
 - ▶ Look for an unusual increase in symptoms
 - ▶ Act early to prevent additional transmission
 - Do not wait for lab confirmation to act
 - ▶ Hand Hygiene
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/hand-hygiene-for-healthcare.html>
 - ▶ Appropriate PPE use
 - Make sure PPE is easily accessible
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Communication

- ▶ Notify management and staff immediately of a potential outbreak
 - ▶ Develop a pre-arranged list of staff to notify
 - ▶ Make sure staff know who to contact (multiple people)
 - ▶ Post signs in public areas
 - ▶ Health Department is a great resource
 - ▶ Standing orders for tests &/or medication
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Isolation

- ▶ Number of sick residents that will trigger a quarantine of a neighborhood.
- ▶ Suspending group activities for the whole facility as opposed to just the quarantined neighborhoods.
- ▶ Limit visitors to the neighborhood as much as possible
 - Educate those that choose to visit
 - Promote strict adherence to infection control measures
- ▶ Resident needs still need to be met. Services and activities are brought to the neighborhood.
- ▶ Going back to “normal”

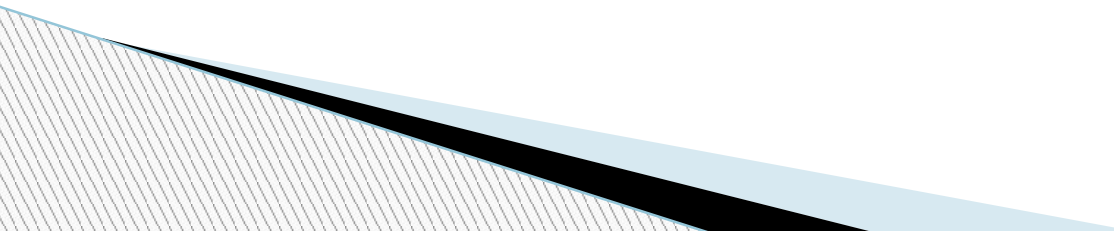
<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/appendix-a-type-duration.html>

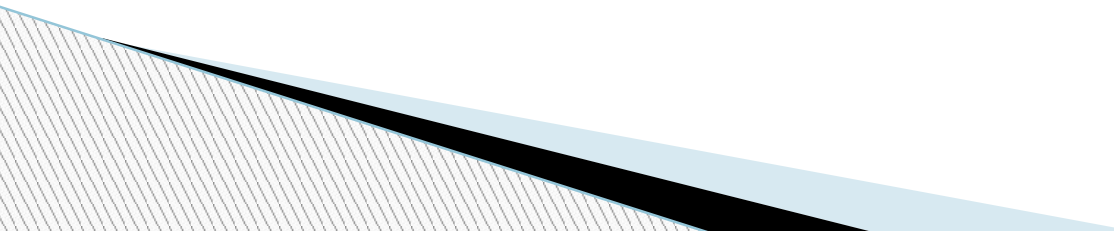
Environmental Services

- ▶ Communicate the importance of this department
- ▶ Make sure they are one of the first departments notified
- ▶ Cleaning the environment is everyone's responsibility, not just EVS staff
- ▶ Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces and patient care areas using an EPA approved product for Healthcare.
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>

Staff

- ▶ Remind staff to stay home when sick
 - ▶ Get vaccinated
 - ▶ Educate on the importance of source control measures
 - ▶ Consistent staffing on the quarantined neighborhood
 - Try to keep staff that has already been exposed to the outbreak on those neighborhoods
 - Do not float to unaffected neighborhoods if possible
 - ▶ No traveling through quarantined areas
 - ▶ Exclude non-essential staff from affected area
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Summary

- ▶ Recognize early
 - ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Strict adherence to Infection Control measures
 - ▶ Environmental Cleaning
 - ▶ Restrict ill staff
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References

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. Outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics—what you need to know.

https://apic.org/Resource_/TinyMceFileManager/for_consumers/IPandYou_Bulletin_Outbreaks_Epidemics_Pandemics.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hand Hygiene Guidance. Page last reviewed: February 27, 2024.

<https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/hand-hygiene-for-healthcare.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Isolation Precautions. Page last reviewed: November 27, 2023.

<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/summary-recommendations.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Appendix A: type and Duration of Precautions Recommended for Selected Infections and Conditions. Page last reviewed February 7, 2025.

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United States Environmental Protection Agency. Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants. Page last updated on September 11, 2025.

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