

# PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY



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Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research

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## Guidelines for Preventing Respiratory Illness in Older Adults Aged 60 Years and Above Living in Long-term Care: A Rapid Review of Clinical Practice Guidelines

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### Summary

We reviewed guidelines on how to **manage and prevent** respiratory viruses for adults aged 60 years and older living in long-term care facilities.

Different ways to **prevent** the spread of respiratory viruses were recommended. Medication was recommended to help **manage** respiratory viruses. There was not enough research on older adults in long-term care with respiratory virus illness and other severe health conditions. There was also no research on how long-term care homes handle respiratory illness in low- and middle-income countries or different cultures.

### What does this mean?

More research is needed, especially for people with many health conditions, who live in low- and middle-income countries, and for people from different cultures.

**Citation:** Rios P, Radhakrishnan A, Thomas SM, Darvesh N, Straus SE, Tricco AC. Guidelines for preventing respiratory illness in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: A rapid review of clinical practice guidelines [preprint]. medRxiv. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.03.19.20039180>.

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### What is the current situation?

The World Health Organization (WHO) asked how to prevent and manage respiratory virus illness in adults aged 60 and older living in long-term care settings (ex. nursing homes, long-term care hospitals, and assisted living facilities). Common respiratory viruses include the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the flu.

### What questions did we aim to answer in our research?

1. How do long-term care settings prevent and manage respiratory virus illness in adults aged 60 and older?
2. How do long-term care settings prevent and manage respiratory virus illness for adults aged 60 and older who have many severe health conditions compared to those without these conditions?
3. How do long-term care settings prevent and manage respiratory virus illness in low- and middle-income countries compared to high-income countries? Do the long-term care settings handle respiratory illness differently in different cultures?

### How did we approach these questions?

- The WHO took part in the research and helped explain the questions, findings, and report.
- We searched online databases and websites for research on ways to control and prevent respiratory viruses in older adults living in long-term care.

### What answers did we find from our research?

- **Ways to prevent respiratory viruses from spreading in long-term care:** hand washing, cleaning surfaces, distancing yourself from people who are sick, wearing face masks, checking often to see if anyone is sick, having rules for staff and visitors, and covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- **Ways to manage respiratory virus illness in long-term care:** most of the research suggested using medicine that treats viruses for staff and/or residents.
- **None** of the research looked at issues that affect older adults in long-term care with respiratory virus illness and many severe health conditions.
- **None** of the research looked at how long-term care homes handle respiratory illness in low- and middle-income countries or in different cultures.

### How confident are we in these findings?

These recommendations should be used carefully because it is not clear how reliable the research is. Other limitations relate to the review methods. Since this was a research request from the WHO, the review methods were changed to meet their needs. Also, because the research request was urgent, some research may have been missed.