



Preventing the Transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Older Adults Aged 60 Years and Above Living in Long-Term Care: A Rapid Review

Date prepared: June 17, 2025.

Summary

We reviewed current guidelines on how to prevent and control COVID-19 for older adults in long-term care.

The recommendations focus on checking and monitoring symptoms/illness, wearing protective clothes, social distancing, cleaning, washing hands, and staffing policies. The most common recommendations included **regularly checking and monitoring** symptoms/illness.

What does this mean?

As COVID-19 is a fast-spreading virus, clear guidelines are important to help healthcare systems prevent and control outbreaks. This review shows that **more high-quality research is needed** to find effective and long-lasting strategies to reduce the spread of disease. This will help healthcare workers in long-term care homes better manage outbreaks in the future.

Citation: Rios P, Radhakrishnan A, Williams C, Ramkissoon N, Pham B, Cormack GV, Grossman MR, Muller MP, Straus SE, Tricco AC. Preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and other coronaviruses in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: a rapid review. *Syst Rev.* 2020;9(1):218.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01486-4>.

For more information, please contact
Dr. Andrea Tricco
(Andrea.Tricco@unityhealth.to).

What is the current situation?

The coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) pandemic has shown that older adults are more likely to get sick from this disease. Older adults in long-term care are especially at risk as the spread of COVID-19 has been observed in numerous healthcare facilities and has contributed to outbreaks.

What questions did we aim to answer in our research?

1. What practices help prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19, MERS, or SARS among people aged 60 and older who live in long-term care?
2. Do these practices differ for adults aged 60 and older living in long-term care who have serious health conditions or are physically weak, compared to those who are not?
3. What are the work and pay policies that may have played a role in COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care homes for people aged 60 and older?

How did we approach these questions?

- We searched online scientific databases and grey literature (such as reports and government or policy papers) on this topic.
- We used a computer-based tool to help find the most relevant studies.
- One reviewer screened the studies, collected data and measured the quality of studies. A second reviewer checked the work to make sure it was correct.

What answers did we find from our research?

- The most common recommendations included **regularly checking and monitoring** symptoms/illness among staff and residents in long-term care facilities.
- The next most common recommendations included: wearing **protective clothes and/or gear** (e.g., gloves, footwear, gowns), **keeping distance** from others and/or **separating patients** who have or may have COVID-19; **cleaning surfaces**; **washing hands**; and **policies** focused on making sure staff were paid while on sick leave.

How confident are we in these findings?

There are some gaps in our review methods due to the need to deliver quick findings. Many of the studies we reviewed were prepared quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic and did not go through a detailed review process. There is a chance we may have missed important documents in other types of health-care facilities that could also apply to long-term care facilities.