# *Respiratory Infection Control Guidance*

These guidelines are for Covid-19, Influenza (Flu), and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and are based on updated guidance received 4/15/25 from OPWDD. This guidance supersedes and replaces previous OPWDD respiratory illness guidelines.

Respiratory illness symptoms may include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose and headache. People should not attend Program if they have respiratory illness symptoms that cannot be explained by another cause.

**If someone we support has respiratory symptoms, please do the following:**

1. Contact the residential RN or RN on-call to notify them so they can be assessed via phone, virtual or in-person.
2. Contact healthcare provider to see if testing for viral illnesses is recommended.
3. People may return to programs when they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and there is overall symptom improvement.
4. Prior to returning to program, the Day program nurse must be notified to assure criteria to return has been met and assure additional precautions are communicated. If the person cannot mask, alternative accommodations will be considered and determined by the Day program RN *prior* to return and communicated to the Day program Associate Director for implementation, including transportation accommodations. The Day program RN will monitor and maintain documentation of the success of the accommodation attempts, including transportation considerations.
   A) Additional precautions at program are recommended for the next 5 days:
      - Emphasize good hand hygiene and cleaning of surfaces
      - Wearing masks
      - Physical distancing
      - Take additional steps for cleaner air/open windows weather permitting.
   B) If symptoms worsen or fever develops after initial improvement, the person must stay home until symptoms improve and they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
   C) Please ensure Linda Holmes, Laurie Banker, and Debra Argus are notified of positive Covid-19, Influenza or RSV diagnoses for the people we support.

   **Note:** If a person cannot tolerate wearing a mask, the program must consider reasonable alternative accommodations so that the person can safely return to program (e.g., using a separate space, outdoor activities-weather permitting etc.) during the 5-day period, and document attempted accommodations.

**Exposure:**

1. For people we support exposed to influenza, contact their healthcare provider to see if antiviral medication is needed.
2. For people exposed to Flu, COVID-19 or RSV, if they remain without symptoms there are no restrictions or masking requirements. Masks should be made available should someone choose to wear one.
3. People who have been exposed should be monitored for signs and symptoms of illness.

**Staff Illness Instructions:**

A) Staff with Covid-19 or respiratory illness will no longer contact the covid line.
B) Staff who are ill with a respiratory illness may return to work if they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and there is overall symptom improvement.
C) Must wear a mask for 5 days upon return to work.

**Core Prevention Strategies**

- Encourage people to stay up to date with recommended vaccinations
- Promote regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or touching high-contact surfaces.
- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content should be readily available in common areas.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces especially high-touch surfaces such as door knobs.
- Display and share educational materials on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, such as covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- People supported with respiratory illness should be encouraged to wear a mask when near others in their home or when they must be in the community for essential care, if they can tolerate a mask.
- Recommend all staff wear well-fitting masks when known cases of respiratory illness is present or when working with vulnerable people during times of increased illness in the community.
- Provide masks at entry points and common areas for those who may need or want to use them.
- Encourage maintaining safe distance from others during cases of respiratory illness