



WA Project Firstline & APIC Quarterly Newsletter

The WA Project Firstline & APIC Quarterly Newsletter is brought to you by Project Firstline Washington and the three Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) Chapters of Washington: Inland-Northwest, Puget Sound, and Southwest Washington.

This newsletter is to inform healthcare workers about trending topics in infection prevention, healthcare-associated infections, and Project Firstline opportunities in Washington. Identifying Inland Northwest and Southwest Washington APIC chapters have Idaho and Oregon members, resources for Idaho and Oregon are also provided.

A Triple Threat: COVID-19, Influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Fall marks the start of respiratory disease season, when we see higher numbers of influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19 cases. Every year, [3-11%](#) of the U.S. population gets the flu. **Flu** is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. There are two main types of influenza viruses: type A and B. Type A and B influenza viruses routinely spread in people. Most people recover from the flu in less than two weeks.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) also follows a similar seasonal pattern to the flu. RSV is a common respiratory virus that causes mild, cold-like symptoms. In most cases, people with an RSV infection will recover in a week or two.

COVID-19 is also a respiratory illness caused by a new, or “novel” coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Most people will recover from COVID-19 on their own.



How does COVID-19, influenza, and RSV spread?

These three respiratory illnesses spread from person to person. They spread mainly when large and small particles of the (respective) virus are expelled from a person who is infected with the illness (COVID, flu, RSV). This can be done when the infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These infected particles can land on the mouth, nose, or in the eyes of a non-infected person. COVID-19, flu, and RSV can also spread when a person touches a surface with the respective virus on it (a doorknob or table) or direct contact with someone who is infected (shaking hands or kissing an infected child) and they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV?

Each virus has varying degrees of symptoms, ranging from no to severe symptoms. Common symptoms for flu and COVID-19 include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/having chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (more frequent in children with flu but can occur at any age with COVID-19)
- Change in or loss of taste or smell (more frequent with COVID-19)

Common symptoms of RSV include:

- Runny nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing, sneezing, or wheezing
- Fever

What are the incubation and infectious periods for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV?

Those infected with **COVID-19** can begin spreading the virus 2-3 days before symptoms begin. COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Asymptomatic people can still spread COVID-19. People are considered contagious for about eight days after their symptoms begin.



The **influenza** viruses can be detected one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. Some infectious people are most contagious in the first three to four days after their illness begins. Symptoms usually begin about two days after flu viruses infect a person's respiratory tract. However, some people can be infected with flu viruses and be asymptomatic but still spread the virus to close contacts. Infants and those with weakened immune systems can be contagious for longer.

People who are infected with **RSV** can be contagious for 3 to 8 days and may become contagious a day or two before they start showing symptoms. Symptoms start appearing within 4 to 6 days after getting infected. Some infants and people with weakened immune systems can continue to spread the virus for as long as four weeks, even after they stop showing symptoms.

Who is more at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, influenza, and RSV?

- Older adults, especially those with chronic medical conditions and those 65 and older
- Immunocompromised individuals
- Individuals with underlying health conditions

Additional risk factors for RSV: Infants and young children

Additional risk factors for flu: Pregnant people, children under 5 yrs, and those with:

- Asthma
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes & other endocrine disorders
- Blood disorders
- Disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve and muscle
- Kidney and liver disorders

How can we prevent the spread of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV?

Actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV include:

- Stay up to date on vaccines
- Stay home when sick
- Use hand hygiene
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick
- Clean frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and mobile devices
- [RSV vaccines](#) available for infants/toddlers and over the age of 60
- Cover your coughs and sneezes (with tissue or shirt sleeve)
- Avoid touching your face (especially eyes, nose, and mouth)
- Improving ventilation



Resources

- CDC PFL Respiratory Virus page [Infection Control Actions for Respiratory Viruses | Project Firstline | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- [Protect yourself from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [About Flu | CDC](#)
- [About COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- [RSV \(Respiratory Syncytial Virus\) | CDC](#)
- Outpatient Respiratory Illness Activity Map – by state [ILINet State Activity Indicator Map \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System | CDC](#)
- [Preventing Flu, RSV and COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities \(wa.gov\)](#)

Idaho:

- [Flu \(Seasonal and Pandemic\) | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare](#)
- [Welcome to Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(idaho.gov\)](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare](#)
- [Diseases & Conditions | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare](#)

Oregon:

- Disease Rules and Reporting: [Oregon Health Authority : Communicable Disease Rules and Reporting : Disease Reporting : State of Oregon](#)

- Influenza Reporting in Oregon: [Oregon Health Authority : Influenza Reporting in Oregon : Influenza Surveillance : State of Oregon](#)
- Oregon Influenza Surveillance Data: [Oregon Health Authority : Influenza Surveillance Data : Influenza Surveillance : State of Oregon](#)
- More information on diseases: [Oregon Health Authority : Diseases A to Z : Diseases A to Z : State of Oregon](#)
- RSV: [Oregon Health Authority : Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) : Diseases A to Z : State of Oregon](#)
- [Oregon Health Authority : COVID-19 Healthcare Partner Resources : COVID-19 Updates : State of Oregon](#)

Washington:

- Influenza [epiTRENDS \(wa.gov\)](#) (see resources section for helpful sites)
- WA Respiratory Illness Data Dashboard: [Respiratory Illness Data Dashboard | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Preventing Flu, RSV and COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities \(wa.gov\)](#)
- WAC: Notifiable Conditions [Chapter 246-101 WAC:](#)
 - [Notifiable Conditions | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [COVID-19 | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Influenza \(Flu\) | Washington State Department of Health](#)
 - [Flu Overview | Washington State Department of Health](#)
 - [Influenza \(Flu\) Information for Public Health and Healthcare | Washington State Department of Health](#)
 - [Influenza Outbreak in Long Term Care Facilities \(LTCF\) Frequently Asked Questions \(wa.gov\)](#)



Washington APIC Chapter Updates

Inland-Northwest Chapter

Inland-Northwest Region Chapter meets on the 2nd Friday of every other month from 12-2 pm. There is no meeting in December.

- The final 2023 meeting took place at Kootenai Health on November 10th, featuring an educational segment led by a Spokane Regional Health District epidemiologist focusing on respiratory season preparedness.



- We're in the process of electing officials for President-Elect, Secretary, and Chapter Membership Chair, and we're on the lookout for individuals to take on roles such as Chapter Education Chair and other pivotal positions to foster our chapter's expansion.
- Each meeting is an opportunity to delve into the latest in Infection Control, exchange solutions, and share knowledge. Moreover, we promote active networking among Infection Preventionists.
- Planning an IP Conference in Spring 2024 at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.

For further details:

Chapter

Website: <https://community.apic.org/inlandnorthwest/home>

Contact

Page: <https://community.apic.org/inlandnorthwest/contactus>

Puget Sound Chapter

- The Puget Sound Region APIC chapter meets on the 4th Thursday of every month from 12-2pm (no meetings in December).
 - We review important legislative updates, IPC news, and educational opportunities.
 - Journal club and round table discussions keep IPs up-to-date on recent activity in the IPC field, as well as connect with local IPs.
- Each month we feature an educational session. Upcoming educational sessions:
 - January: Mission Zero Influencers of CAUTI: New Thinking, New Approaches
- Register in advance for meetings. Links to Eventzilla and Zoom registration sites can be found on our social media and website (below) a few weeks prior.
 - Check us out on [Facebook](#)
 - Connect with us on [LinkedIn](#)
 - Puget Sound APIC: <http://community.apic.org/pugetsound/home>
 - Via email: pugetsound@gmail.com

Southwest Washington Chapter

- Chapter website: [Home - APIC Oregon and Southern Washington Chapter](#)
- Connect: [Contact Chapter - APIC](#)
- Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month from 1:30-3:30pm
 - Next meeting is Jan. 2024



Project Firstline Updates

NEW Podcast Episodes!

Check out our latest episode on [penicillin allergies](#), a continuation of our Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) mini-series with Dr. Jessica Zering, AMS Pharmacist at WA DOH.

On the [Washington State Department of Health's Project Firstline Podcast](#) we discuss infection prevention and public health practices, identifying the importance and impact on our lives and those of our community. We are currently up to 17 episodes on important IPC topics!

Education at Your Fingertips!

Sign up to receive free Washington Project Firstline text messages! Get timely infection prevention updates over your phone, wherever you are, including access to:

- Short, informative infection control training videos from the CDC and WA Project Firstline
- Tips and tools for developing staff's foundational infection prevention knowledge
- Infection prevention fast facts to help raise awareness and keep infection control top of mind

- In minutes a week, this resource can help you engage your team in infection prevention!



Sign up today! Text "JoinWAIPC" to 59309 or scan the QR code to receive free text updates from the Washington Project Firstline team! Don't forget to pass this opportunity along to your healthcare friends, family, and coworkers/staff!

Facilities/Admin: this can be a simple way to show what you are doing to continue staff education on infection prevention and control.



You are an Infection Prevention Champion – Become Recognized for it!



As an individual: Washington Project Firstline is offering a series of online, interactive, and easily accessible infection prevention and control training modules. Staff who **complete all six modules will earn free continuing education credits** for two contact hours and completion certificates after each module. [Start learning and earning today!](#)

Show off your facility: **Become a Frontline Infection Prevention (IP) Champion facility** by demonstrating that 90% of your frontline staff have completed the [Washington Project Firstline Infection Control Training](#) series. The process only takes [5 simple steps](#). Champion facilities receive a certificate, recognition on the Washington Project Firstline webpage, and (the best outcome) staff who are trained in infection prevention.

Championing infection prevention and control is not an easy feat. We recognize this and want to recognize YOU for your dedication.



WA Project Firstline Module Job Aids now in 5 Languages!



Our [Washington Project Firstline Infection Control series](#) includes job aids to assist with daily task reminders after each module. We now offer these job aids in English,

Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Find them on our website under [“Washington Infection Prevention Online Training”](#) and in each training module.

Attn. Healthcare Provider Training Programs!

We would like to discuss what infection prevention education you currently provide, if any. We would like to have a quick discussion on how we can better serve you and ensuring your students are prepared for the healthcare workforce.

Contact ProjectFirstline@doh.wa.gov for additional information.

CDC Project Firstline Micro-Learns

Micro-learns are short, adaptable training resources to educate your team on a variety of topics through guided discussions. These discussions aim to assist in connecting infection control concepts to practicing in their daily tasks. We’re hopeful this resource helps healthcare workers recognize infection risks and take action to stop the spread of germs. Incorporate these micro-learns in your next team meeting or huddle!

Current micro-learn topics: (What to do when you see...)

- [Blood](#)
- [Cough and Congestion](#)
- [Draining Wound](#) – NEW!
- [Rash](#)

WA DOH HAI/AR Update

Updated Isolation Precaution Signs

Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA), in collaboration with DOH and local infection preventionists, have released updated isolation precaution signage.

See [Isolation precautions – Washington State Hospital Association \(washington-state-hospital-association.myshopify.com\)](https://www.washington-state-hospital-association.myshopify.com) for the updated/downloadable signs.

COVID-19 Preparedness and Outbreak Control Checklist for Long-Term Care Facilities

We recently released a [checklist](#) for facilities to quickly assess their COVID infection control practices and respond to a COVID-19 outbreak. Please note: [this checklist](#) does not replace formal guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or any Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) guidelines or recommendations.

Updated: Visitation Videos for LTC Settings and Adult Family Homes

Three visitation educational videos have been updated to help visitors to long-term care (LTC) settings learn about basic infection control measures for preventing COVID-19, influenza, and other infectious diseases.

- [LTC Visitation Guidance video](#): basic infection prevention practices.
- [LTC Isolation Precautions video](#): proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when visiting a resident who is in quarantine.
- [Adult Family Home \(AFH\) Visitation video](#): basic visitation guidance specific to AFH settings.



Project Firstline is a national collaborative led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide infection control training and education to frontline healthcare workers and public health personnel. The Washington State Department of Health is proud to partner with Project Firstline, as supported through the Strengthening HAI/AR Program Capacity (SHARP) Project. CDC is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the policies of CDC or HHS and should not be considered an endorsement by the Federal Government.

