

ARIs are a common cause of outbreaks between October and April each year. This document will provide guidance on how to respond to this type of illness including infection control measures that are recommended by [The Ministry of Health Guidance Document](#) from **February 2025**.

Case Definition (Criteria)	Notify Public Health when: New and unexplained respiratory symptoms i.e., worsening cough or shortness of breath and fever		
Declaring an Outbreak	Two cases of ARI within 48hrs with at least one being laboratory-confirmed OR Three cases of ARI (laboratory confirmation not needed) within 48hrs (Declared by Public Health).		
Declaring Outbreak Over	When no new cases of infection have occurred in a timeframe based on the incubation period of the illness, typically 8 days. (Declared by Public Health).		
Case and Contact Management	People Supported ✓ Wear proper PPE (mask, gown, eye protection) for droplets and contact until 5 days after the onset of acute illness or until symptoms resolve (whichever is shortest) ✓ Test for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses ✓ Walks outside of room with employees wearing appropriate PPE	Employees ✓ Self-monitor for symptoms of illness ✓ Leave work as soon as possible if symptoms develop at work ✓ Return to work after 24hrs symptom-free and no fever (48hrs if gastrointestinal symptoms) ✓ Wear mask for the 10 days following symptom onset	
IPAC Measures	✓ Isolate symptomatic individuals as soon as possible. ✓ Notify Public health unit, employees, residents, and families as soon as an outbreak is suspected or confirmed. ✓ Universal masking and physical distancing when able in outbreak areas ✓ Screen employees and visitors for symptoms of respiratory illness.		
Restrictions	Positive Case For the Home: See <i>Case and Contact Management</i> , refrain from group activities Visitors: Avoid non-essential visits when visitor is symptomatic of an illness, masking and physically distance for essential visits Employees: See <i>Case and Contact Management</i>	Outbreak For the Home: Universal Masking Visitors: Follow masking and PPE requirements as per Public Health guidelines Employees: See <i>Case and Contact Management</i>	
Enhanced Environmental Cleaning	Each Use Clean and disinfect outbreak equipment (if unable to dedicate sole use to outbreak room)	Twice Daily Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces	Daily Clean and disinfect low touch surfaces

If there are additional questions connect with the Healthcare Strategies Manager for assistance with navigating specific situations.