

Update to infection prevention control guidance to include seasonal respiratory infections

News story

The infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance for health and care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic has been updated to cover other seasonal respiratory infections.



The [updated guidance](#) is intended to help prevent transmission of seasonal respiratory viral infections focusing on SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in health and care settings.

The new guidance recommends:

- removal of the COVID-19 high, medium and low risk care pathways following stakeholder feedback so that everyone without symptoms of a respiratory illness will follow the same precautions, such as at least 1 metre physical distancing instead of 2 metres
 - however, the pathways can still be applied by organisations locally if deemed to be appropriate for example in response to high case rates
- screening, triaging, and testing for SARS-CoV-2 should continue over the winter period – testing for other respiratory pathogens will depend on the health and care setting according to local and country-specific testing strategies, for example for RSV and influenza some trusts may use point of care tests and others use tests that are sent to labs
- staff, patients and visitors to wear face masks at all times while in health and care settings over winter
- physical distancing remains at 2 metres where patients with suspected or confirmed respiratory infection are being cared for or managed
- physical distancing can be reduced to at least 1 metre, increasing whenever feasible to 2 metres, for non-respiratory patients across all health and care settings – this could expedite the faster treatment of people with non-respiratory conditions across health and care settings

The IPC principles in this document apply to UK health and care settings. This includes the independent or private sector, mental health and learning disabilities, primary care, care homes (but not care homes in England), care at home, maternity and paediatrics.

Adult social care providers in England should refer to existing [COVID-19 care home](#) guidance already in place.

Published 22 November 2021