Frontline Best Practice for Supporting Residents in Care Homes with COVID-19

Recognition

Classical Symptoms in the General Population

- Fever, cough, loss of taste/smell, but...

Wider Range of Symptoms in Older Adults

- Lethargy/Fatigue
- Reduced appetite/Fluid Intake
- Loose stools, nausea, abdominal pain
- Headache, new aches & pains

Change in behaviour is common when unwell, particularly in those living with dementia

- Signs of delirium
- Agitated, restless
- Sleepy, less active
- Change in levels of confusion

Discuss your concerns with the home's GP or ANP

Consider:
- Passing urine normally?
- Eating & drinking normally?
- Communicating as normal?
- Change in bowel habits?
- Changed mobility?

Always consider other medical causes

Knowing the person is the most critical factor in detecting when they are not themselves.

Management

The most valuable part of COVID care is the person-centred care you specialise in giving

- Promoting regular oral fluid intake
- Checking temperature
- Controlling fever/shakes/shivers - cool clothes, removing layers, paracetamol - do not use fans
- Oxygen may be helpful where levels are low, and can be arranged in the home

Look for signs of pain and treat, reducing distress

- Check your resident's care plan and wishes
- Talk to those who are important to the resident

Recovery from COVID-19 can be unpredictable, despite your best interventions - some residents will still die.

All will benefit from your care & support

Risk Reduction

- Regular handwashing + use of alcohol gel
- Use of PPE: fluid-resistant mask, apron, gloves + eye protection
- Isolation as soon as symptoms detected
- Regular staff testing and early resident testing to identify outbreaks quickly
- Avoid crossover between symptomatic and asymptomatic residents
- Reducing footfall

Wider Help

You are not alone facing the challenges of COVID-19

Help is available 24/7 from your GP practice or NHS 24. They can give advice or do a video consultation with you and your resident.

In-person assessment can be provided when needed.

Contact your local health protection team if you are concerned a resident may have COVID-19.

Care home guidance is available online from Health Protection Scotland + Scottish Government.

Staff wellbeing support is available at www.promis.scot