

Reported Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Facilities

About Communicable Disease Reporting in Long-term Care Facilities

Oregon law requires long-term care facilities (LTCFs) to report communicable disease outbreaks to local public health authorities. Most such outbreaks have been gastrointestinal illness (vomiting or diarrhea) caused by norovirus; other causes include influenza and salmonellosis. Many outbreaks have an unknown cause, but are termed “norovirus-like,” based on symptoms.

With the goal of rapidly controlling the spread of disease-causing germs like norovirus, influenza or *Salmonella*, local public health officials work with LTCFs to institute appropriate control measures and to collect information about cases to ensure that the control measures are working.

Disease outbreaks, especially those caused by the highly contagious norovirus, are common in institutional settings. It is important to note that reporting by LTCFs represents recognition of such outbreaks and efforts to stop them quickly. Outbreak reports **are not** considered by public health officials to be an indicator of the quality of care within LTCFs.

LTCF Outbreak Data

As part of the Oregon Health Authority’s commitment to transparency, reported outbreaks in LTCFs are listed below. By law, the names of persons afflicted during a communicable disease outbreak must remain confidential.

- [Reported Outbreaks in Long-term Care Facilities, Oregon 2002-2013 \(pdf\)](#)

Preventing Outbreaks in LTCFs

Disease-causing bacteria and viruses in LTCFs do not arise from nowhere: someone brings them into the facilities.

- These outbreaks serve as a reminder that persons with respiratory or intestinal infections should avoid visiting patients in LTCFs until **48 hours** after their symptoms have resolved.
- [Vaccination against influenza](#) is also important to shield LTCF residents and staff from potentially serious infection.

Learn More

- [Norovirus](#)
- [Influenza](#)
- [Salmonellosis](#)
- Get information about [choosing a Long Term Care Facility](#) - from Oregon DHS Aging and People with Disabilities division.