

Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Case Definition

- Sudden onset of symptoms
- AND
- At least one of the following four respiratory symptoms: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, coryza
- AND
- A clinician's judgement that the illness is due to an infection

This case definition aligns with the European Commission/ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control case definition

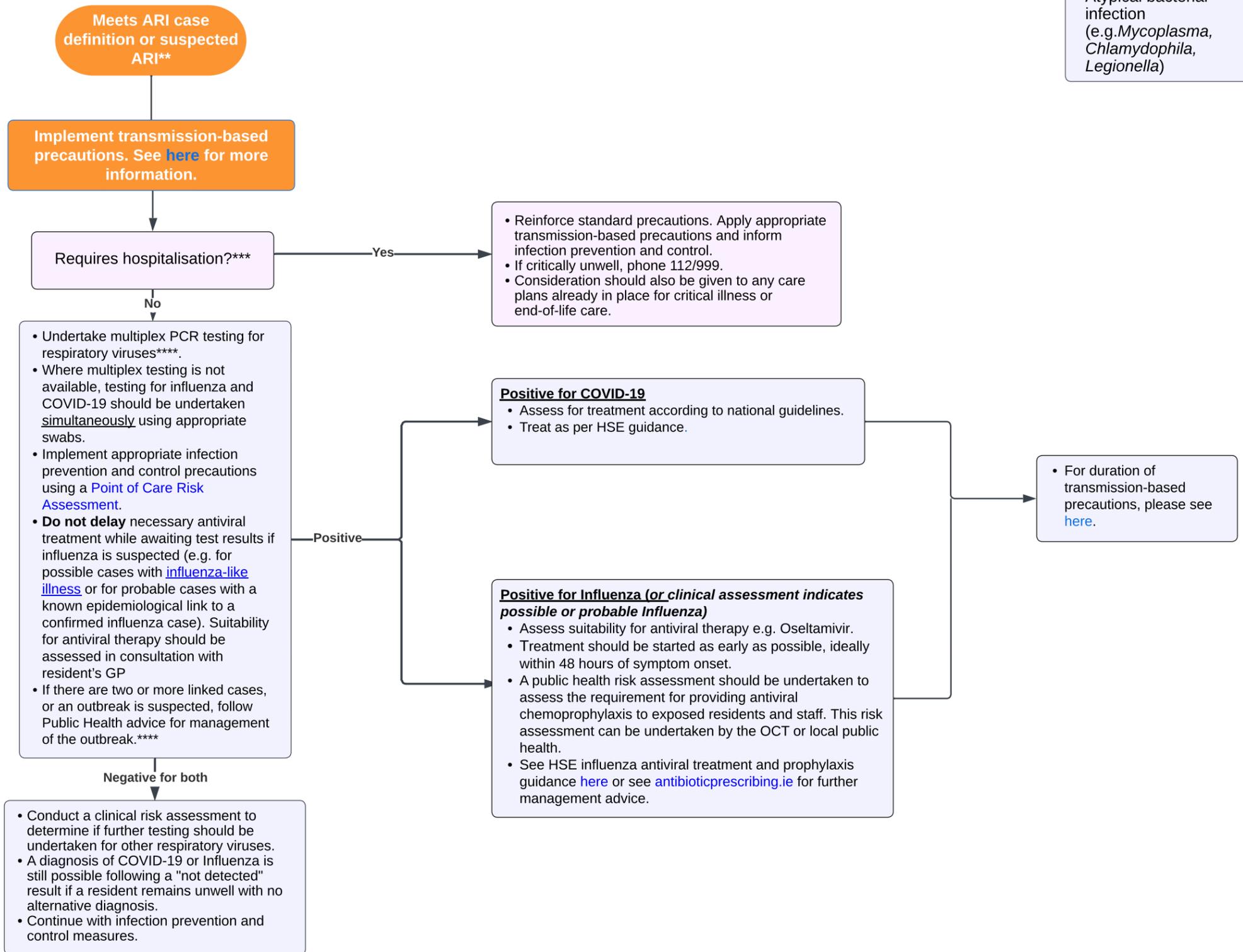
**It is important to remember that older people with viral infections very often do not have fever and respiratory symptoms and may only have symptoms such as:

1. lethargy
2. increased confusion
3. change in baseline condition
4. loss of appetite

Clinical judgement with a high index of suspicion should be used when assessing residents.

Differential diagnosis of ARI may include:

- COVID-19
- Influenza
- RSV
- Rhinovirus
- Parainfluenza
- hMPV
- Adenovirus
- Pertussis
- Bacterial infection (e.g. Hib, *Streptococcus*, *Staphylococcus*)
- Infective exacerbation of COPD
- Atypical bacterial infection (e.g. *Mycoplasma*, *Chlamydia*, *Legionella*)



*Please note the term Residential Care Facility (RCF) encompasses all congregate care settings where people live for extended periods for example nursing homes, community hospitals, certain mental health facilities and community housing units for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. Please note this pathway provides guidance for testing of Acute Respiratory Infections in Residential Care Facilities. This pathway should be read in conjunction with [Public Health & Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines on the Prevention and Management of Outbreaks of COVID-19, Influenza and other Respiratory Infections in Residential Care Facilities](#)

***Determined by a clinical assessment undertaken following extant procedures within the Residential Care Facility.

****In the context of an outbreak (two or more cases) of acute respiratory infection, a Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA) will be undertaken. This PHRA will direct the management of the outbreak. Testing of up to five symptomatic residents is generally recommended. However, in some circumstances e.g. when infection with more than one respiratory pathogen is suspected in the facility, additional testing of symptomatic individuals may be required following a clinical risk assessment. This will be assessed on a case by case basis. See [here](#) for further information.

ARI Outbreak Definition
A cluster/outbreak of two or more cases of acute respiratory infection (ARI) arising within the same 48- hour period in the above settings/situations, which meet the same clinical case definition. Investigation of lower numbers of cases in a shorter timeframe can be undertaken if considered appropriate following public health risk assessment.