

## 1.1 Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene measures minimize influenza transmission. Communicate these to employees. They include:

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing - encourage people to cough or sneeze into the crease of their elbow as opposed to their hands.
- Dispose of used tissues immediately.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth.

Ensure supplies of hygiene products (soap, hand towels, gloves, and masks) are available while recognizing that their supply will be reduced in pandemic influenza. Ensure the environment is cleaned regularly.

Post hygiene notices at entrances, washrooms, hand washing stations, and public areas.

Brochures, newsletters, global emails, notice boards, and pay-slips are some of the materials that can be used to communicate this advice.

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**Hand washing (with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) is the single most effective measure to reduce risks of transmitting infection.**

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### Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is an important step in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, including influenza. Hand hygiene can be performed with soap and warm water or by using waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Transmission of influenza can occur by indirect contact from hands and articles freshly soiled with discharges of the nose and throat of an acutely ill individual. By frequently washing your hands you wash away germs that you have picked up from other people, or from contaminated surfaces, or from animals and animal waste.

The influenza virus is readily inactivated by soap and water. Antibacterial hand wash products are not required because routine products, along with proper hand washing procedures, will inactivate the influenza virus.










Waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used as an alternative to hand-washing and are especially useful when access to sinks or warm running water is limited. Placing alcohol-based hand sanitizers at the entrance of facilities is useful in preventing transmission of infectious diseases.

### 1.1a Basic Hygiene Notice





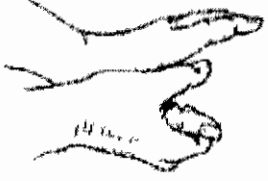

## **PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS AGAINST RESPIRATORY ILLNESS**

- ❖ **HANDWASHING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF**
- ❖ Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
  - Use a tissue and dispose of this once used in the waste
  - Always wash hands after coughing and sneezing or disposing of tissues.
- ❖ Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes.
- ❖ Avoid contact with individuals at risk (e.g. small children or those with underlying or chronic illnesses such as immune suppression or lung disease) until influenza-like symptoms have resolved.
- ❖ Avoid contact with people who have influenza-like symptoms.
- ❖ Ask people to use a tissue and cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and to wash their hands afterwards.

1.1b Hand Hygiene Notice - Soap and Water

<b>Hand Hygiene with Soap and Water</b>		
<b>1. Remove jewelry. Wet hands with warm water</b> 	<b>2. Add soap to palms</b> 	<b>3. Rub hands together to create a lather</b> 
<b>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</b> 	<b>5. Clean knuckles, back of hands and fingers</b> 	<b>6. Clean the space between the thumb and index finger</b> 
<b>7. Work the finger tips into the palms to clean under the nails</b> 	<b>8. Rinse well under warm running water</b> 	<b>9. Dry with a single-use towel and then use towel to turn off the tap</b> 
<b>Minimum wash time 10-20 seconds.</b>		

1.1c Hand Hygiene Notice – Hand Sanitizer

Hand Hygiene with Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer		
<p><b>1. Remove jewelry. Apply enough product to open palms.**</b></p> 	<p><b>2. Rub hands together palms to palms</b></p> 	<p><b>3. Rub in between and around fingers</b></p> 
<p><b>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</b></p> 	<p><b>5. Rub backs of hands and fingers. Rub each thumb.</b></p> 	<p><b>6. Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm</b></p> 
<p><b>7. Keep rubbing until hands are dry.</b>  <b>**The volume required to be effective varies from product to product. Enough product to keep hands moist for <u>15 seconds</u> should be applied.</b>                      Do not use these products with water. Do not use paper towels to dry hands.</p>		
<p><b>Note: Wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Certain manufacturers recommend washing hands with soap and water after 5-10 applications of gel.</b></p>		

## 1.2 Workplace Cleaning

Virus transmission can also be reduced by cleaning the environment and hard surfaces (sinks, handles, railings, objects, counters) with neutral detergents followed by a disinfectant solution. Influenza viruses can live for up to two days on hard surfaces but are inactivated by disinfectants. Good disinfectants are sodium hypochlorite, granular chlorine and alcohol.

- Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned often.
- Do not share cups, dishes, and cutlery and ensure they are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water.
- Clean the workspaces of employees that have recently become ill.

## 1.3 Increase Social Distancing

Social distancing means minimizing human-to-human contact in peak phases of pandemic influenza. Contacts are those persons who have had close (one metre or less) physical or confined airspace contact with an infected person within four days of that person developing symptoms. These are likely to include family members and/or other living companions, workmates (if in confined airspace environments) and possibly recreational companions.

Epidemiological evidence from a developing pandemic may change the definition of “contact”. In Canada contact management with respect to reportable diseases is mandated by law (for instance the *Quarantine Act* and other health related *Acts*).

Employees will probably elect not to circulate in crowded places and large gatherings of people during pandemic influenza. It is recommended that business consider the use of new technologies to facilitate social distancing by using communications networks, remote access and web access (among other techniques) to maintain distance.

Suggestions on how to minimize close contact include:

- Avoid face-to-face meetings.
- Minimize meeting times.
- Meet in large rooms.
- Use communications and network technologies and devices to communicate.
- Avoid unnecessary travel (especially to endemic regions).
- Cancel or postpone non-essential meetings/workshops/training sessions.
- Leave a gap between shifts.
- Ventilate the workplace between shifts.

- Avoid cafeterias and restaurants.
- Introduce staggered lunch time

#### **1.4 Summary: How to Stay Healthy During the Pandemic Influenza**

##### **Personal Health**

- Eat, rest well and exercise in moderation.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Minimize visitors to your home.
- Check up on friends and family who live alone.
- Watch for regular influenza updates from Health Canada.
- Get the influenza vaccine when available.
- It is recommended that people at high risk of getting influenza and its complications and their caregivers receive an annual influenza vaccine.

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**Washing hands is one of the most important ways  
to prevent the spread of influenza**

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##### **Stay away from crowds**

- Stock up on basic items.
- Shop at smaller stores with smaller line-ups.
- Shop at off peak hours and find out which stores stay open late/24 hours.
- If possible phone ahead your grocery order for quick pick up.
- Order groceries over the phone/on line for delivery.
- Arrange to pay bills at ATMs, on line or over the phone.
- Cancel or postpone family gatherings, outings or trips.

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**If you cannot avoid crowds, minimize the  
amount of time you spend around people**

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### **Stay healthy at work**

- Work from home or arrange to work flex hours if possible.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap.
- Use waterless sanitizing gel to clean hands if soap & water are not available.
- Clean objects and hard surfaces that are handled by many people with a disinfectant.
- Use stairs instead of crowded elevators.
- Cancel non-essential meetings: use teleconferencing/video conferencing/emails/fax.

**If you feel unwell stay home,  
rest, and drink plenty of fluids**

### **1.5 Personal Protection Materials**

***In the event of a pandemic, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada's web site for the most current information on the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).***

Broadly defined, personal protective equipment or PPE is specialized clothing or equipment worn to protect someone against a hazard. It can range from just a mask or a pair of gloves to a combination of gear that might cover most or all of the body. In the case of influenza, PPE may include using masks and protective barriers.

- ✓ *Using masks:* People with respiratory infection symptoms should use a disposable surgical mask to help prevent exposing others to their respiratory secretions. Any mask must be disposed of as soon as it becomes moist or after any cough or sneeze, in an appropriate waste receptacle, and hands must be thoroughly washed and dried after the used mask has been discarded.
- ✓ *Protective Barriers:* Protective barriers (i.e., glass or plastic) may provide useful protection for people such as front-counter staff or public transport drivers, whose duties require them to have frequent face-to-face contact with members of the public where social distancing is either not possible or not practical.

## 1.6 Policies for Exposed Employees

All decisions regarding infectious diseases should be based on accurate and up-to-date information, considered in light of your particular situation. When in doubt, contact your local Medical Officer of Health.

Your business may decide to screen employees prior to coming to work or at the workplace to minimize the risk of a sick individual coming to work and infecting the rest of the workforce. Sick employees are encouraged to stay home until their symptoms have disappeared. **In the event of a Pandemic, it is recommended that employers check the Public Health Agency of Canada's website (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>) for the latest advice.**

Develop a workplace policy around when an employee is fit or unfit to work. The Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Assessment form (see section 5.7a) may be used as a template for screening employees. The criteria for determining fitness to work may depend on the size of the organization and the job responsibilities of the employee.

If a person feels ill, or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work, they are to contact a designated contact person **by telephone** if at all possible. Workers who are ill should stay at home until symptoms are resolved.

The designated contact person should then do the following:

1. Avoid visiting this person if it can be avoided – manage the process over the phone.
2. Check if the employee has any of the symptoms.
3. If the employee does not have any symptoms like those listed, they are very unlikely to have influenza, and should be reassured but advised to call the designated contact person again later or to see their physician if they are still concerned.
4. If the employee does have symptoms that match some of those listed, they should be treated as a “suspect case.”

It may be helpful to have a staff influenza notification form completed, including details of any staff and/or visitors they have been in contact with. This information will permit the designated contact person to identify recent movements and monitor well-being during the Pandemic.

5. The employee should be informed where they can find a surgical mask and instructed to wear it immediately. This is to help protect other staff.
6. The employee should leave work and immediately contact a health professional in the manner advised by Public Health Agency of Canada on its website at that time. This may involve phoning the person's normal doctor or nurse, or a specially designated centre to seek further advice.
7. The employee's manager should be informed that they have left work.
8. The employee should, if at all possible, avoid public transport when leaving work.

9. Contact management – It is helpful for employers to:

- Identify contacts (once an employee is suspected to be infected);
- Advise contacts that they have been in contact with a person suspected of having influenza; and,
- Ask contacts to go home, and stay at home until advised otherwise.

10. The employee's work station should be cleaned and disinfected.

11. Your designated contact person will need to set up a system to manage the absence and return to work of the employee and their contacts. Some issues to consider include:

- Advice to the employee on how long to stay away from work (the Public Health Agency of Canada website will have advice on this once the characteristics of a Pandemic are known);
- Decisions on leave and cover arrangements;
- Checking on the staff member during his/her absence from work. This will facilitate treatment, contact tracing, etc., if they become ill;
- Establishing a process in your plan to ensure that:
  - Employees are healthy before allowing them to return to work; and,
  - They are encouraged to return to work once they are well.

## **Isolation and Quarantine**

The *Quarantine Act and Regulations* helps protect Canadians from dangerous and infectious diseases. Under this Act, Public Health Quarantine Officers have the authority to ask a person suspected of having an infectious disease to undergo a medical examination and to detain that person if necessary.

Quarantine may be used in the early stages of the Pandemic to slow or stop the spread of influenza.

A person may be placed on quarantine if they have been in contact or exposed to a person with an infectious illness such as influenza. This is because a person with influenza is infectious for 24 hours before they know they are sick. In order to protect the public, Public Health Quarantine Officers can place people on quarantine to prevent influenza from spreading to others. Quarantine means staying at home or in a designated building for 3 days from last exposure until the Public Health Quarantine Officer is sure that the person is not infected with the flu. Quarantine means not going outside, not going to work, school or other public places and not meeting with other people unless given permission by the Public Health Quarantine Officer.

## **Quarantine Q&A for Exposed Employees**

### ***Why am I on quarantine?***

You have been identified as being in contact with someone who has influenza or have recently been in an area with a high rate of influenza. You may have been exposed to the influenza virus and may have spread it to other people. Although you feel well today, you may become ill in a few days. Persons having influenza can spread the virus even when they are still feeling well.

### ***How long do I have to stay on quarantine?***

You must stay on quarantine for at least 3 days or until a Public Health Quarantine Officer tells you that it is safe for you to be off quarantine. While on quarantine, someone from public health may call you to see how you are doing and will ask you questions about having fever, chills, aches or a cough. While on quarantine you must stay inside and not go to work or school or visit anyone until you are off quarantine. It is advised that you do not have visitors while on quarantine.

### ***What will happen if I develop symptoms of influenza while on quarantine?***

If the person on quarantine becomes ill with influenza, notify the Quarantine Officer via your local health authority. You may also seek advice from your family physician. If symptoms are severe and need immediate action, call 911 (Ambulance, Paramedics) or go to the closest emergency department.

### ***Is my family safe?***

If you are on home quarantine, you and your family should take certain steps for protection. Your family should stay at least one metre away from you. All of you should wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap. Items handled by the person on quarantine should be washed thoroughly with soap and hot water or a disinfectant such as a 10% bleach solution (made up of one part bleach and nine parts water).

## **Human Rights Legislation**

Under both federal and provincial human rights legislation, employers have a duty to accommodate employees with infectious diseases or those who have been exposed to same. The level of accommodation will depend on the circumstances.

### 1.7 Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Assessment Form

An ILI assessment tool may be used as a screening tool to determine if employees should be excluded from work due to illness.

#### Influenza-Like (ILI) Assessment Form

Please check the following:

ILI (Influenza-Like Illness) in the general population is determined by the presence of items 1, 2, 3, and any of 4 a-c, which could be due to the influenza virus.

Please indicate if any of the following apply:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Sudden onset of respiratory illness **AND**
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Fever greater than 38.0 degrees C **AND**
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Cough **AND**
4. \_\_\_\_\_ One or more of the following
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ sore throat
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ joint aches
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ muscle aches or weakness

Persons with influenza like illness should remain at home until they have fully recovered (usually 7 days or 5 days after symptoms stop)

Persons who have been exposed within the last three days to someone with an influenza-like illness should stay at home for 3 days until they are sure they are not ill.

#### Fit to Work

- Recovered from influenza-like illness (ILI)
- Immunized for longer than two weeks
- On antiviral medication
- Asymptomatic

#### Unfit to Work

- Has influenza-like illness (see ILI Assessment Tool above)

#### Fit to Work with Restrictions

- Due to limited resources, persons with ILI may be asked to work with restrictions
- Recommend such individuals be isolated physically from other employees or customers
- Maintain meticulous hand hygiene and environmental cleaning.