

RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS (GROUP HOMES): Summary of Infection Prevention Guidelines for Influenza including Pandemic H1N1 Influenza

These Infection Prevention Guidelines are intended to assist **non-health care staff** in residential care facilities and residential programs (Group Homes), by providing guidance on routine infection prevention practices that are applicable to all influenzas, including pandemic H1N1. For information on pandemic H1N1 and precautionary measures for health care providers, please see the infection control guidelines available in the Health Sector section of : www.manitoba.ca/flu

Some individuals may react to pandemic H1N1 with fear and anxiety. In order to assist people in coping please ensure that these guidelines are shared and supported, and provide staff with access to available support services such as help line phone numbers, Employee Assistance Programs, peer support and other resources. Facilities are encouraged to involve staff, clients, family members, and volunteers in the pandemic planning process.

The pandemic H1N1 influenza virus appears to be transmitted in the same manner as other influenza strains. Influenza spreads easily from person to person when the virus released from an infected person's coughing and sneezing enters the nose and/or throat of another person. The virus can also rest on hard surfaces for a number of hours, where it can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth, nose and/or eyes.

People are usually contagious the day before they develop symptoms and are most contagious during the first three to five days of the illness. Children and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for a longer period of time. Not everyone who gets influenza develops symptoms but they still may be able to spread it to others, especially if they cough or sneeze.

Symptoms of Influenza:

Sudden onset of cough and fever with one of: sore throat, joint pains, muscle aches, fatigue.

Risk Assessment

All staff should follow routine measures to prevent spread of infection as outlined in section A, whenever they are interacting with residents or other staff members. Routine measures to prevent infection are designed to limit the

spread of any communicable disease, including but not limited to influenza.

In addition, prior to any interaction with residents, staff should assess their risk by noting whether the resident has symptoms of influenza as described above. If so, the staff person should also follow the precautions outlined in section B. Risk also depends on frequency and duration of exposure to clients with influenza such that a single exposure would not be expected to carry the same risk as multiple or prolonged exposures over the course of a shift.

A. Routine Measures to Prevent Infection from any Communicable Disease

Hand Hygiene

- Staff should wash their hands regularly. When soap and water are not available, a wide variety of different hand hygiene products may be considered depending on the needs of the particular setting.
- Limit touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

- Cover a cough or sneeze by coughing into your elbow or using a tissue to cover your nose or mouth
- Place the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.

Personal Protective Equipment

- There may be circumstances when staff members wear gloves and/or masks as an additional routine precaution. This includes wearing:
 - Gloves when coming into contact with blood or other body fluids. Staff should always wash their hands after removing gloves.
 - Surgical mask when providing direct care that is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood or other body fluids. Staff should always wash their hands after removing masks.

B. Additional Precautions to Prevent Infection from those with Influenza Symptoms

Accommodation

- Ideally, residents with influenza symptoms should be accommodated in a separate room, or if not possible, separated from others by at least one metre and if feasible, a two metre separation may be preferred.
- Where practical, select roommates for their ability and that of their visitors, to comply with hand hygiene and cough etiquette practices. Roommates of residents with influenza symptoms should not be persons with immune deficiencies or who have other high risk conditions (eg. chronic illness, weakened immune

system, severe obesity, malnutrition, alcoholism, substance abuse, smoking, pregnancy, Aboriginal ancestry).

- Residents with symptoms of influenza should not participate in group social activities or common dining areas until they are well enough to do so.
- During an influenza outbreak in a facility, consider restricting social activities or other group activities.
- Visitors with influenza symptoms should be advised to defer their visit until their symptoms resolve.
- Ideally at least one metre and if feasible, a two metre separation should be maintained between residents and visitors if either has influenza symptoms. A minimum of one metre is recommended.
- Restricting visitors should be considered during a community outbreak of influenza.

Cleaning

- Frequently touched surfaces including public areas (such as bathroom taps and doorknobs) should be cleaned with household cleaners on a regular scheduled basis.

Transport/Transfer

- Residents with influenza symptoms may be transported/transferred for important purposes if well enough to travel. Notify transport services and the receiving agency regarding respiratory precautions required.
- If necessary to travel, residents with influenza symptoms being transported / transferred should:
 - Wash their hands prior to leaving.
 - If appropriate put on clean clothing before leaving.
 - If feasible, the person with influenza symptoms should wear a surgical / procedure mask. If not feasible and a 2 metre separation cannot be maintained, staff should wear a surgical / procedure mask.
 - Wash their hands after removal of mask.
- Staff should wash their hands immediately after transfer / transport.

For more Information

- For additional information on pandemic H1N1 Influenza, please see: www.manitoba.ca
- For more information on influenza and self care, contact Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 or your primary health care provider.