

# INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES FOR PANDEMIC FLU FOR OUTPATIENT MEDICAL OFFICES AND OTHER AMBULATORY SETTINGS

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## INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES FOR PANDEMIC FLU FOR **OUTPATIENT MEDICAL OFFICES AND OTHER AMBULATORY SETTINGS**

**All healthcare facilities should follow the OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS. Infection control measures need to be in place before patients with flu come into your building.**

### KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PANDEMIC FLU:

- Fever above 100°F or 37.8°C
- Cough or sore throat
- Shortness of breath, difficulty or distress in breathing
- Other symptoms may include:
  - Headache
  - Myalgia
  - Prostration
  - Acute rhinitis (runny nose)
  - Otitis media
  - Nausea and vomiting is more common among children
- Typical flu symptoms, such as fever, may not always be present in
  - Elderly patients
  - Young children
  - Patients in long-term care facilities
  - Persons with underlying chronic illnesses.

### HAND HYGIENE

- If hands are visibly soiled, wash hands with soap and water.
- If hands are not visibly soiled, use approved alcohol-based products for hand disinfection.
- Always perform hand hygiene between patient contacts and after removing PPE.

Ensure that resources to facilitate hand hygiene are readily accessible in areas in which patient care is provided

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### SCREEN ALL PERSONS WHO ENTER THE BUILDING FOR SYMPTOMS OF FLU:

- Post signs at the entrance to outpatient offices that tell people to let the receptionist and staff know **when they first register** for care if they have flu symptoms.
  - Fever above 100° F or 37.8° C
  - Cough and/or sore throat or shortness of breath

**If persons have flu symptoms, offer them a facemask.**

### TRIAGE PATIENTS CALLING FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS FOR FLU SYMPTOMS.

- Discourage unnecessary visits.
- Instruct patients with flu symptoms to:
  - Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
  - Put their used tissue in the nearest waste basket
  - Cough or sneeze into the upper sleeve, not hands, if they don't have a tissue
  - Wash their hands with soap and water after coughing or sneezing, or
  - Clean their hands with alcohol-based hand cleaner

### POST SIGNS THAT PROMOTE COUGH ETIQUETTE IN:

- Elevators
- Waiting areas
- Cafeterias
- Lavatories

Signs are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>.

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### **PROVIDE THESE MATERIALS IN WAITING AREA FOR PATIENTS AND VISITORS:**

- Tissues
- Waste containers with pedal-operated lids or
- Uncovered waste containers
- Soap and disposable towels for hand washing or
- Dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub

### **PATIENT PLACEMENT:**

Keep people with flu symptoms away from other patients and staff

- Have coughing persons sit at least 3 feet away from other persons
- Have separate waiting areas for patients with symptoms of flu
- Place signs indicating the separate waiting areas
- Place patients with flu symptoms in an examination room as soon as possible.

### **USE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS FOR**

- Dishes and eating utensils
- Disposal of solid waste
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection
- Laboratory specimens
- Linen and laundry
- Patient-care equipment
- Postmortem care

### **Cleaning and disinfection after patient discharge or transfer**

- Follow standard facility procedures for post-discharge cleaning of an isolation room.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that were in contact with the patient or might have become contaminated during patient care. No special treatment is necessary for window curtains, ceilings, and walls unless there is evidence of visible soiling.

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- It is not necessary to spray (i.e. fog) occupied or unoccupied rooms with disinfectant.

### **OTHER AMBULATORY SETTINGS**

All ambulatory settings that provide chronic healthcare services should implement infection control measures for flu.

- Screen patients for flu-like illness by phone or before coming into the facility.
- Reschedule appointments for those whose care is non-emergency.
- Cancel all non-emergency services when there is flu in the community.