

TRANSFER/TRANSPORT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH ILI IN NON HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Summary of Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Influenza Like Illness (ILI) including NOVEL A/H1N1 INFLUENZA

These Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines are intended to guide workers in residential care facilities. At the present time, novel A/H1N1 influenza virus appears to be transmitted in the same manner as other influenza strains.

Influenza spreads easily from person to person by coughing or sneezing, by hand-to-hand contact with an infected person, or after handling objects contaminated by infected people. The virus can survive on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours, on cloth, paper or tissue for up to 12 hours and on hands for about five minutes, long enough for you to inadvertently touch your mouth, nose or eyes and transfer the virus to your body. People can spread influenza up to 24 hours before symptoms appear and up to seven days after. Not everyone who gets influenza develops symptoms but they still may be able to spread it to others, especially if they cough or sneeze. Individuals with symptoms of influenza may be contagious for up to a week.

Definition of Influenza-like Illness

A person with:

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- Fever* greater than 38°C AND cough AND one or more of sore throat, joint/muscle aches, or weakness / severe fatigue**

*In individuals age less than 5 or 65 years and older on acetaminophen or corticosteroids, fever may not be prominent.

**In children less than 5 years of age, gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present. Cough may not be prominent in young children.

Risk Assessment

All workers and care givers should follow routine measures to prevent spread of infection as outlined in section A below when interacting with clients/residents. In addition, prior to any interaction with clients/residents, workers should assess their risk by noting whether the client/resident has symptom(s) of ILI as described above. If so, the worker should also follow the precautions outlined in section B below.

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A. Routine measures to prevent spread of infection

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to reduce the spread of germs.
- Staff with ILI should be advised to stay home from work and limit contact with others to reduce the chance of infecting them.

Hand Hygiene

- Workers should perform hand hygiene regularly. For non-health care settings, soap and water is sufficient. Where soap and water are not available, there is a wide variety of different hand hygiene products which may be considered depending on the needs of the particular setting.
- Individuals with ILI symptoms should be instructed to perform hand hygiene frequently.

Cough Etiquette

- Individuals with ILI symptoms should also be taught to follow cough etiquette practices (coughing into sleeve, using tissues, wearing a surgical mask).

B. Precautions for those with ILI symptoms

Respiratory Precautions

- Workers should wear a surgical or procedure mask when entering a room or providing direct care to residents with ILI.
- Workers do not need to mask if the symptomatic individual wears a mask.

Duration of Precautions

- The precautions outlined in section B above should be continued by workers interacting closely (within 2m) with individuals with ILI from the time they develop symptoms of ILI to 7 days afterwards and symptoms are no longer present.

Other personal protective equipment

- Gloves should be worn when providing personal care to individuals with ILI, if there is a risk of coming in contact with nasal or other respiratory fluids.

Cleaning:

- Clean transport chair / stretcher and other surfaces with household cleaners after an individual with ILI has touched them.

Transport/Transfer

- Individuals with ILI symptoms should not be transported except for essential purposes.
- In advance, notify transport services and the receiving agency regarding respiratory precautions required.
- If necessary to travel, individuals with ILI being transport/transferred should:
 - Perform hand hygiene prior to leaving.
 - If possible put on clean clothing before leaving.
 - Wear a surgical mask
 - Perform hand hygiene after removal of mask.
- Staff should perform hand hygiene immediately after transfer/transport and after removing protective equipment.

Where can I get more information?

- For additional information on 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.