

## GENERAL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES

### 1.0 Hygiene and Health Guidelines

Sanitation and cleanliness are essential to maintaining a healthy immune system and preventing the spread of the virus. Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. The immune system becomes more susceptible to compromise when the following guidelines are not used:

#### General Health and Hygiene:

- Minimize visitors to the home
- Visit those who have influenza only if necessary, and stand more than 3 feet away from them
- Keep personal items separate if a household member has influenza. Clean surfaces around them often with a detergent cleanser
- Don't share personal items or drinks
- Drink plenty of water
- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly
- Take a multivitamin daily, especially older adults
- Decrease stress, stay optimistic and remain active
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in a wastebasket
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue
- Clean desktops, phones, computers, doorknobs, and any other frequently used items with an alcohol/bleach based cleaner
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing
- Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay at home if you are sick
- Stay away from others who are known to be sick

#### Food Preparation:

- Wash hands before and after handling food
- Keep raw poultry and its juices away from other foods
- Keep hands, utensils, and surfaces, such as cutting boards, clean
- Use a food thermometer to ensure poultry has been fully cooked.
- Be especially vigilant for any dead or sick cats and report such findings

#### Animals:

- If cats bring a sick or dead bird inside the house, put on plastic gloves and dispense of the bird in plastic bags for collection by local veterinary animal handlers
- Keep stray cats outside the house and avoid contact with them
- If cats show breathing problems or nasal discharge, a veterinarian should be consulted
- Do not touch or handle any sick-looking or dead cat (or other animal) and report to the authorities
- Wash hands with water and soap regularly and especially after handling animals and cleaning their litter boxes or coming in contact with feces or saliva

- Dogs can only be taken outside the premises if kept restrained
- Do not feed any water birds
- Disinfect (e.g. with bleach 2-3 %) cages or other hardware with which sick animals have been transported or been in contact with.
- Wash animal blankets with soap or any other commercial detergent
- Those living on farms should also be aware of the risk that semi-domestic cats (feral domesticated and farm cats) could shed the virus into poultry feed or housing, leading to exposure of poultry.
- Avoid crowds during influenza season.

## **1.1 Social Distancing**

The goal of social distancing in the event of pandemic influenza infecting humans is to increase the likelihood of containment. Such measures aim to increase the social distance among people in an outbreak zone and thus reduce opportunities for transmission to occur. Like quarantine, these measures are socially disruptive and some may cause considerable distress or discomfort in the affected population. They include:

### **General:**

- Recommendation to maintain one-yard spatial separation between individuals
- Cancel non-essential mass gatherings and public transportation
- Limit travel to essential needs only
- Confine asymptomatic persons within the home
- Control borders of the county to be ready to establish isolation and quarantine if necessary
- Use approved facemasks

### **Work:**

- Close schools and workplaces
- Work from home (telecommute); Stop face-to-face meetings and replace with phone calls/ conference calls
- Moratoriums on hand-shaking
- Staggered breaks
- Posting of infection control guidelines in prominent locations

## 1.2 Signs and Symptoms of Contagion

Many symptoms, such as a runny nose, can be caused by a variety of diseases, only some of which are contagious. Here are some facts to keep in mind when considering your symptoms:

- Allergies are not contagious.
- Bacterial infections, treated via antibiotics, are not contagious.
- Colds and the (seasonal) flu are caused by viruses and ARE contagious. Symptoms include fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough, with the flu producing more severe symptoms than colds. You can be contagious from the day before you start to feel symptoms to 7 days after the symptoms start.
- Illnesses such as “the stomach flu” that involve vomiting and/or diarrhea and are not part of a chronic condition (e.g., colitis) are often highly contagious. The CDC recommends that you not come to work for at least two days AFTER your last vomiting or diarrhea episode.

## 1.3 Personal protective equipment (PPE) – General Public

PPE is any type of specialized clothing, barrier product, or breathing (respiratory) device used to protect from serious injuries or illnesses while doing their jobs. Proper use of PPE by everyone involved aids infection control because it helps:

- Protect wearers against infection or contamination from blood, body fluids, or respiratory secretions;
- Reduce the chance that one will infect or contaminate others; and
- Reduce the chance of transmitting infections from one person to another.

### When to use PPE

In general, use PPE to cover the face, hands, other exposed skin, and clothing during patient care activities that may cause exposure to body fluids (such as blood, respiratory secretions, vomit, urine or feces).

### How to know what types of PPE to use

CDC (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), and not FDA, makes recommendations on infection control measures. These may include advice on use of personal protective equipment. For more information about CDC's recommendations for PPE, see CDC's Infection Control Guidelines.

### Buying PPE

You do not need a prescription to buy personal protective equipment. You can buy personal protective equipment from pharmacies, from medical suppliers, or from sources you find on the Internet.

To find lists of all medical devices that have been cleared by FDA for legal commercial distribution, see the following:

- Surgical masks
- Surgical N-95 respirators
- Medical gloves

- Surgical gowns

### **Avoid Reusing PPE**

Do NOT reuse personal protective equipment. Almost all personal protective equipment is disposable and is designed to be used one time for contact with one person. Dispose of the equipment carefully after each use or if the equipment becomes soiled (see Disposing of PPE). The only type of personal protective equipment that can be reused is PPE labeled as washable for multiple use.

### **Washing and disinfecting PPE**

There is no proper way to wash or disinfect **disposable** personal protective equipment. Dispose of the equipment carefully after each use or if the equipment becomes soiled (see sections on disposing of PPE below).

### **Sharing PPE**

Do NOT share personal protective equipment. Used equipment will not provide an effective barrier against hazards or infection.

### **Disposing of contaminated PPE at home**

When disposing of PPE at home:

- Always wear medical gloves;
- Place used or soiled PPE into a tied plastic bag to prevent dripping;
- Carefully clean waste containers with disinfectant or diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 9 parts water); and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after handling.

## **1.4 Personal protective equipment (PPE) – Patient Care**

PPE is any type of specialized clothing, barrier product, or breathing (respiratory) device used to protect workers from serious injuries or illnesses while doing their jobs. Proper use of PPE by workers involved in patient care aids infection control because it helps:

- Protect wearers against infection or contamination from blood, body fluids, or respiratory secretions;
- Reduce the chance that healthcare workers will infect or contaminate patients or coworkers; and
- Reduce the chance of transmitting infections from one person to another.

PPE may also be used by workers in health care settings to help protect against certain chemotherapy agents or other hazards surrounding the patient.

### **When to use PPE in patient care**

CDC and OSHA make recommendations or requirements for protecting health care workers from illness or injury that often include recommendations for use of PPE. (CDC's infection control

recommendations also are designed to help limit transmission to and among patients.) For more information, see CDC's Infection Control in Healthcare Settings.

In general, use PPE to cover the face, hands, other exposed skin, and clothing during patient care activities that may cause exposure to body fluids (such as blood, respiratory secretions, vomit, urine or feces), or certain chemotherapy agents.

### **How PPE intended for patient care is regulated**

PPE that is intended for use in preventing or treating disease is subject to regulation under the device provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. This includes PPE that is marketed for patient care in health care settings (such as surgical masks, gloves and gowns). FDA evaluates the performance of PPE intended for use in patient care before it is marketed. It also makes sure that manufacturers follow good manufacturing practices and address complaints and adverse events associated with their products.

For more information, see FDA's Role in Regulating PPE.

### **How to know what types of PPE to use**

CDC (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), and not FDA, makes recommendations on infection control measures. These may include advice on use of personal protective equipment. For more information about CDC's recommendations for PPE, see CDC's Infection Control Guidelines.

### **Buying PPE**

You do not need a prescription to buy personal protective equipment.

You can buy personal protective equipment from pharmacies, from medical suppliers, or from sources you find on the Internet.

To find lists of all medical devices that have been cleared by FDA for legal commercial distribution, see the following:

- Surgical masks
- Surgical N-95 respirators
- Medical gloves
- Surgical gowns

### **Avoid Reusing PPE**

Do NOT reuse personal protective equipment. Almost all personal protective equipment used in patient care is disposable and is designed to be used one time for contact with one patient. Dispose of the equipment carefully after each patient use or if the equipment becomes soiled (see Disposing of PPE).

The only type of personal protective equipment that can be reused is a surgical gown that is labeled as washable for multiple use.

## Washing and disinfecting PPE

The only type of personal protective equipment that can be washed is a surgical gown that is labeled as washable for multiple use.

There is no proper way to wash or disinfect **disposable** personal protective equipment. Dispose of the equipment carefully after each patient use or if the equipment becomes soiled (see sections on disposing of PPE below).

## Sharing PPE

Do NOT share personal protective equipment. Used equipment will not provide an effective barrier against hazards or infection.

## Disposing of contaminated PPE at healthcare and public facilities

*The FDA does not regulate the disposal of PPE. The following are general recommendations. Please refer to the [EPA's medical waste website](#), [OSHA's bloodborne pathogens and needlestick prevention website](#), and individual State websites for specific requirements regarding the disposal of contaminated PPE.*

PPE that is dripping with blood or body fluids (grossly contaminated) should be placed into a container that is leak-proof and closed. If the outside of the container becomes contaminated, it should be placed into a second similar container. Waste containers must be marked with either a biohazard symbol such as the one shown below, or placed in a colored-coded container such as a red bag.

Lightly soiled PPE, for example PPE with spots of blood or with small amounts of body fluids absorbed into the materials, can be discarded in the regular trash.

Waste containers holding contaminated PPE are considered to be bio-hazardous medical waste which needs to be disposed of according to individual state regulations.

There are no additional requirements for disposing of PPE from patients in isolation. Follow the same methods and procedures as for any other medical waste.

## Disposing of contaminated PPE at home

When disposing of PPE at home:

- Always wear medical gloves;
- Place used or soiled PPE into a tied plastic bag to prevent dripping;
- Carefully clean waste containers with disinfectant or diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 9 parts water); and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after handling.