

Guidance on Personal Protection

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM INFLUENZA – A (H1N1)

Proper hand hygiene and other appropriate protective measures will greatly minimize the spread of virus and help protecting yourself and others. Transmission of virus from an infected person to a non-infected person depends on the closeness of the contact, length of exposure and survival of the virus on hands and the environment.

VIRUS SURVIVAL

- Evidence suggests that the flu virus does not survive for long periods of time on soft items although it can survive up to 24 hours on hard surfaces.

- Hard, non-porous surfaces (e.g. stainless steel counter or plastic bowls): flu virus is able to survive for up to 72 hours but only for 24 hours in large enough quantities to pose a risk of infection
- Soft surfaces/furnishings (e.g. clothes, handkerchiefs, tissues, magazines): flu virus is able to survive for up to 12 hours but only for about 15 minutes in large enough quantities to pose an infection risk
- Once the virus is transferred to hands, it survives for less than five minutes
- Cleaning your hands with soap and water (followed by drying) according to the guidelines is an effective way to kill flu virus on your hands
- The flu virus is killed within 30 seconds by appropriate antiseptic handrub solutions

HYGIENE

The risk of becoming infected with the virus is effectively reduced by following strict hygiene measures.

Hands can be cleaned by washing with soap and water (followed by drying) according to the guidelines or using antiseptic hand washing solution/appropriate antiseptic handrub solution. If your hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be used instead of antiseptic handrub solution.

Hands must be cleaned:

- When arriving at and leaving the workplace
- When arriving at home from work or outside activities
- Before and after direct contact with contaminated surfaces
- After contact with body secretions
- Before and after removing protective work clothing and gloves

Masks should not be seen as a substitute for hand hygiene and other basic precautions

- After handling soiled items
- Before handling food
- Before eating
- Before smoking
- Before touching your mouth, nose or eyes

Recommended PPEs include surgical mask, high filtration mask, disposable glove, plastic gown/apron and plastic goggle

- Types of PPEs to be used would depend on the circumstances and risks involved.
- Use of PPEs are recommended if you are coming into close contacts (within one metre) of a suspected, probable or confirmed case of influenza A (H1N1)
- Special trainings have to be provided for the use of high filtration masks and other similar PPEs.
- Ensure that you are using the PPE correctly
- Use the PPE (usually aprons, surgical masks and gloves) only when there is a risk of

contamination from respiratory secretions.

Whilst the appropriate use of PPE may offer some protection to clothes from contamination, during a pandemic you may wish to consider changing out of your work clothes before going home. Work clothes that are washed at home can be washed in a domestic washing machine. You may soak the cloth in a diluted bleach solution (0.05% bleach solution) if it is likely to be contaminated.

Disposing off PPEs

In order to minimize the risk of infecting yourself or your colleagues from used PPE, it is essential that it is removed in a standard manner following these steps:

1. first of all remove your gloves by turning them inside out in one single motion
2. then remove your apron
3. wash your hands and
4. finally remove the surgical mask

Avoid touching the front of the mask. The disposable PPEs should be bagged and disposed of. After disposing of PPE, it is essential that you clean your hands with soap and water. Use an appropriate antiseptic handrub if water is not available.

Used PPE can be disposed of with normal household waste, preferably in tied polythene bags. There is no need for non-healthcare settings to introduce clinical waste procedures for the disposal of PPE during an influenza pandemic.

STAFF WORKING IN THE TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

Staff in a vehicle or vessel transferring a suspected or probable influenza A (H1N1) is advised to use a surgical mask.

Staff in these vehicle or vessel may be involved in carrying a probable or confirmed case of influenza A (H1N1). If a probable or confirmed patient is being carried to a facility, staff in close contact should wear a high filtration mask, plastic apron/gown and gloves.

Follow the hand hygiene measures and general respiratory hygiene etiquettes.

STAFF WORKING IN QUARANTINE FACILITIES

When entering a room occupied by a person with suspected or probable influenza A (H1N1)

Visits to such premises should be restricted to those that are essential or emergencies. If you are required to enter such a premise as part of your duty or otherwise, you are advised to use a surgical mask, plastic apron and gloves.

Assisting a healthcare worker with an aerosol generating healthcare procedure

It is very unlikely that MNDF staff will need to wear PPE with high filtration masks. However, if

they were asked to assist a healthcare worker in an aerosol generating healthcare procedure they would need to use full PPE with high filtration mask.

During a pandemic, there may be situations where a member of public or someone in custody becomes a suspected case of influenza A (H1N1) or you may be involved in restraining someone or administering first aid to or resuscitating someone who is suspected case of influenza A (H1N1). In these situations, you should follow standard guidance as follows:

- If a person has died at home and is a suspected case of influenza A (H1N1), then surgical mask and disposable gloves should be worn when handling the body or articles in the home. Avoid touching your face or mouth with your gloved hands.
- It is important that you discard the gloves and wash your hands after leaving the premises.

Dealing with people in custody

During a pandemic if someone in custody is suspected of having influenza A (H1N1); they (the prisoner) should wear a surgical mask and be medically assessed. In addition, if you enter their cell or are within one metre of the prisoner then you should wear an apron, surgical mask and gloves.

Dealing with the population at large

PPE is **NOT** needed for routine policing activities. You should only use PPE if you have to come into close contact (within one metre) with someone who is a suspected case of influenza A (H1N1). Otherwise general respiratory hygiene etiquettes and measures to reduce contact should be used.

Assisting a healthcare worker with an aerosol generating healthcare procedure

It is very unlikely that police officers will need to wear PPE with high filtration masks. However, if they were asked to assist a healthcare worker in an aerosol generating healthcare procedure they would need to use full PPE with high filtration mask.

Cleaning and disinfection procedures

Janitors and refuse collectors are advised to use disposable gloves.

The flu virus is easily killed by commonly available cleaning products and detergents.

Freshly prepared bleach solution (0.05% bleach solution)# should be used for surface cleaning.

Rooms, public premises such as elevators and reception desks should be cleaned at least once a day. Damp rather than dry dusting should be performed.

Hands should be washed immediately after all cleaning procedures even if disposable gloves are used.

Room decontamination

There is no need for fumigation or other special measures where a room is occupied or has been vacated after occupation by people who may be infected with influenza A (H1N1).

- Staff who clean rooms occupied by an ill person must wear surgical mask, an apron and gloves (PPE) before cleaning
- Ventilate the room by opening external windows
- Remove the bed linen and towels and place in a bag
- Do not leave loose items in the corridor or common parts
- Dispose of all disposable items such as sachets and toilet rolls
- Clean remaining items such as cups, glasses etc using water and detergent
- Apply Freshly prepared bleach solution (0.05% bleach solution) and allow at least 10 minutes before wiping clean
- Pay particular attention to hand contact surfaces e.g. door handles, taps, flush handle, light switches, telephone handsets, TV remote control, bedside tables, etc.
- Use plenty of cleaning cloths to avoid re-contaminating surfaces

Rubbish bags

The risk of infection by contact with tissues or contaminated materials in the rubbish bin is very low but it is recommended that gloves are used if handling soiled tissues.

Hands should be washed immediately after all cleaning procedures even if disposable gloves are used.

