

## Infection Prevention and Control Measures to Reduce the Spread of Disease

### Routine and Enhanced Precautions

It is critical that everyone be aware of the type of measures they should take to reduce the spread of diseases like Influenza (and Pandemic Influenza). The following steps should be taken by the public, organizations and work sites to reduce illness at all times; **thereby increasing preparedness for an emergency such as a Pandemic**. Reinforcing these strategies should be part of common practice.

Four simple steps should be used routinely to reduce the spread of Disease:

1. Practice frequent, good hand hygiene. Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
2. Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
3. Maintain your health.
4. Stay home if you are sick.

An added or enhanced precaution should be used during severe influenza seasons or a **pandemic**:

5. Practice social distancing.

#### **Steps the Public can practice routinely:**

- Get immunized and stay well - eat healthy and exercise.
- Wash hands frequently and teach your children to wash their hands properly, particularly after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose.
- Keep fingers away from the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing/sneezing with a tissue or sleeve rather than your hands; dispose of the tissue immediately and teach your children this “etiquette”.
- Carry hand sanitizer with you in your purse, brief case or knapsack.
- When someone is ill, thoroughly clean surfaces in the home using your usual cleaning products; but clean more frequently.
- When cleaning; pay special attention to frequently touched items and horizontal surfaces such as telephones, keyboards, washrooms, kitchen area, counter tops, door knobs and light switches.
- Increase fresh air in your home - open windows - even in winter for a brief time.
- Stay home from work or school and avoid public places when ill.
- Do not visit at hospitals/nursing homes or attend large gatherings when ill.

**Enhanced Precautions the Public can take in a Pandemic ( to be added to the above routine precautions):**

- Keep one metre/three feet or an arms-length away from someone who is coughing or sneezing. This can help during a severe influenza season.
- Do not attend public gatherings.
- Do not shake hands, kiss or hug people.

**Steps Work Sites and Organizations can practice routinely:**

- Promote hand hygiene by:
  - having signage posted in washrooms, kitchens
  - maintaining a stock of supplies in washrooms and kitchens such as paper towels and liquid soap
  - considering having alcohol-based hand cleaner available at entrances and where people gather
- Consider supplying facial tissue and extra waste paper baskets for disposal.
- Increase fresh air in buildings - open windows if possible - even in winter for a brief time.
- Practice good environmental cleaning of frequently touched and shared surface.

**Enhanced precautions Work Sites and Organizations can take in a Pandemic ( to be added to the above routine precautions):**

- Provide social distancing opportunities to reduce the frequency of contact between people:
  - avoid face-to-face meetings when possible by teleconferencing
  - keep a one metre/three feet distance from others
  - consider hand shaking, hugging and kissing to be unacceptable as greetings
- Increase environmental cleaning with your regular cleaner:
  - clean the personal workplace at the beginning of each shift
  - when cleaning; pay special attention to frequently touched items and horizontal surfaces such as telephones, keyboards, washrooms, kitchen area, counter tops, door knobs and light switches
- Consider screening people to identify those who may be ill to reduce the risk of an infected person entering the building.

**Note On The Use of Masks:**

- There is currently no evidence to suggest that the use of masks in general public settings will be protective when the pandemic influenza virus is circulating in the community.
- Organizations need to make independent decisions re: the use of masks based on the nature of their business.
- If a decision is made to use masks, the current recommendation as outlined in Ontario's Pandemic Plan (2006), is a surgical mask.