

Proper Coughing Hygiene, Respiratory Hygiene, and Hand Washing Techniques in Trying to Decrease the Spread of Influenza Virus

In all settings, at all times, and all persons at a community care setting should utilize and be reminded to utilize:

1. Proper coughing and respiratory hygiene:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you do not have a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then do so directing the cough or sneeze into the inner aspect of your elbow. This way the germs do not go into the air or on your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items might could be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.

- If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. If you are sick, stay home for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

2. Also, of critical importance is proper and frequent hand washing:

- It is best to wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- When water is not available, use alcohol-based products (sanitizers)
- Wash hands before preparing or eating food and after going to the bathroom
- Keeping your hands clean helps you avoid getting sick

3. When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up from a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- After handling uncooked food, particularly raw meat, poultry, or fish
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After handling items contaminated by flood water or sewage
- When your hands are visibly dirty

4. Using alcohol-based sanitizers

- Apply product to the palm of hand
- Rubs hands and fingers together
- Rub product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

5. Washing with soap and water

- Place your hands together under water (warm if possible)
- Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds (with soap if possible)
- Count slowly from 1 to 20
- Wash your hands thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, and under the fingernails
- Clean the dirt from under fingernails
- Rinse the soap from your hands
- Dry your hands completely with a clean towel if possible (this helps remove the germs), however if towels are not available it is okay to air dry your hands
- Pat your skin rather than rubbing to avoid chapping and cracking
- If you use a disposable towel, throw it in the trash