

White County Public Infection Control Suggestions

The primary object of this policy is to protect the health of the public by reducing the possibility that they will become exposed or, if infected with an illness, such as the flu, infect others. It is important that all persons practice good hygiene habits and learn to recognize the symptoms of influenza in themselves and others and take the appropriate steps necessary to minimize infection for themselves and/or contagion of others..

Overview

Influenza and other viruses are known to survive on non-porous surfaces, such as steel and plastic, for up to 24-to-48 hours after introduction, and from cloth, paper, and tissues for up to eight- to-12 hours. Viable virus can be transferred from non-porous surfaces to hands for 24 hours and from tissues to hands for 15 minutes. Influenza is easily spread from person to person by coughs and sneezes and/or by touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with hands. It is therefore important that the following procedures be followed:

Workplace Sanitation

Surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected daily or after each use for shared work areas. Surfaces that should be addressed include door knobs, telephone handsets, touch pads, keyboards, mice, control knobs, all work surfaces, chair arms, seats and adjustment handles, and any object that is touched or potentially coughed on by the public. These areas should be cleaned with an EPA registered disinfectant by the person using the work area.

If an EPA-registered disinfectant is not available, use a dilute solution (1part chlorine to 6 parts water or 5.33 oz per quart, 22.33 oz per gal) of bleach solution, applied with moistened towel and allowed to remain wet for 5 minutes. Do not soak or spray surfaces, especially keyboards or other electronic equipment. Gloves should be worn during cleaning procedures. When using chemical disinfectants, all manufacturers' instructions should be followed. Always use disposable towels or wipes.

Personal Hygiene

Transmission of influenza and other illnesses can occur from direct or indirect contact with hands and articles freshly soiled by someone who is infected. The evidence of infection may or may not be evident. Influenza and other illnesses are readily inactivated on hands by cleaning them with soap and water or an alcohol –based hand rub. Proper hand washing is the single most effective barrier to infection. Hands must be thoroughly and properly washed at the beginning and end of each work shift, after using the toilet

facilities, coughing, sneezing or after touching surfaces that may have been contaminated by someone already infected. Rinse hands under cool running water and apply antimicrobial soap, lather well. Wash hands and fingers for a minimum of 15 seconds. Work soap around fingers and nails. Do not use a scrub brush, because it may cause abrasions.

Rinse thoroughly with cool running water (hot water opens pores and dilates capillaries).

Dry hands with paper towels and use the towel to turn off the faucet.

Cover cuts and abrasions with Band-Aids or finger cot until fully healed.

If hands are not visibly soiled or sticky, they may be sanitized with an alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol. Apply enough product to cover all surfaces of both hands, rubbing hands together until all surfaces, including between fingers, are dry.

Hands should *always* be washed and/or disinfected, after using the toilet facilities, coughing or sneezing, or eating.

Always cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or by using the bend of the elbow when tissues are not available. Dispose of tissues immediately and clean your hands.

Do not share glasses, dishes or eating utensils unless they have been thoroughly washed and dried first. Break areas without washing facilities should be equipped with disposable cups, plates, and utensils.

Social Distancing

Everyone should take every appropriate action to minimize the possibility of infections to themselves and others, especially during the flu season. In addition to the sanitation measures listed above, social distancing may be crucial to protect yourself and others.

Persons who frequently come face-to-face with the public can reduce their risk by maintaining a distance of approximately 3 feet from anyone who they suspect may be ill. Avoid shaking hands or hugging others if you suspect they, or yourself may be ill.

Employees/Students who feel ill, or observe another exhibiting influenza symptoms, should notify their supervisor/teacher immediately. (the ill should avoid face-to-face contact if possible). The supervisor/teacher will determine if the employee/student should be sent home or segregated until they can leave the workplace/school. The following should be used as a screening guideline for influenza-like illnesses:

Ascertain if the employee or student has any of the following symptoms

- Fever (feels feverish or hot)
- Headache,
- Fatigue or weakness
- Sore throat, cough, or difficulty breathing

- Muscle or joint aches or pains

Once an employee/student has left the workplace/classroom, the area should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected following the guidelines listed previously.

Employees/Students who become ill should remain at home and away from others as much as possible. If influenza is suspected, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

The following precautions are recommended:

- It is recommended that you minimize visitors to your home during times of illness.
- Designate one caregiver in the home, to limit exposure of those who are not infected.
- Obtain a flu shot each year.

Employees/Students who have been diagnosed with influenza should not return to work or school until they are no longer infectious.

This information is provided for educational purposes:

Differences Between Influenza And The Common Cold

| Symptom | Influenza | Common Cold |
|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Fever | Usual, sudden onset, last 3-4 days | Rare |
| Headache | Usual and can be severe | Rare |
| Aches and Pains | Usual and can be severe | Rare |
| Fatigue and weakness | Usual, can last 2-3 weeks after acute illness | Sometimes, but mild |
| Debilitating fatigue | Usual, early onset, can be severe | Rare |
| Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea | In children < 5 yrs old | Rare |
| Watering of the eyes | Rare | Usual |
| Runny, stuffy nose | Rare | Usual |
| Sneezing | Rare in early stages | Usual |
| Sore Throat | Usual | Usual |
| Chest Discomfort | Usual and can be severe | Sometimes, but mild to moderate |
| Complications | Respiratory failure, can worsen a chronic condition, can be life threatening | Congestion or earache |
| Fatalities | Well recognized | Not reported. |

Information provided by State of Minnesota Pandemic Influenza Plan