

CANTERBURY PRIMARY RESPONSE GROUP

Preparing Your Workplace for the 2019 Influenza Season

With the “flu season” already upon us it is a timely reminder to review your infection prevention and control procedures within your general practice and community pharmacy. Any patient/consumer presenting to your practice/pharmacy has the potential to be infectious. For this reason, systems must be set up to protect staff from possible cross infection by patients/consumers. This is a Health and Safety requirement.

Quick View Checklist:

Standard precautions underpin safe protection and should be used at all times with every patient/consumer. The following checklist is intended as a guide for you.

- **Signage readily available**
 - Check signage at the entrance to your facility, reminding patients/consumers to use the alcohol hand rub and to alert staff if they have a cough or cold.
 - Door signs for general practices and community pharmacies is available from
 - General Practice: <http://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/GP-Stop-if-you-have-a-cold-or-cough.pdf>
 - Community Pharmacy: <http://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Pharmacy-Stop-if-you-have-a-cold-or-cough.pdf>
 - Consider displaying signs encouraging hand washing and cough etiquette in the waiting room – a selection of posters are available from <http://www.handhygiene.org.nz> or www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm

- **Alcohol hand hygiene products readily available for both patients and staff**
 - Hand washing is the single most important step in reducing the spread of infection.
 - All patients/consumers should be asked to use an alcohol-based hand rub when they enter your premises - this is for their protection as much as for the protection of staff.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least **60% alcohol**.

 - Remember the 5 moments of Hand Hygiene
 - **Moment 1:** Before patient contact
 - **Moment 2:** Before a procedure
 - **Moment 3:** After a procedure or body fluid exposure risk
 - **Moment 4:** After patient contact
 - **Moment 5:** After contact with patient surroundings

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** is to be worn by you, and your staff to protect them from risks of cross infection.
 - Selection of PPE is based on an assessment of the risk of transmission, level of exposure and the nature of the disease.

- It is important that all staff understand when to use PPE as part of standard and transmission based precautions and also the correct way to put on and remove PPE.
 - Continue to have disposable multi-purpose masks available for patients/consumers presenting with respiratory symptoms and ask them to wear these at all times in your facility.
- **Maintaining a clean environment**
 - Review your workplace cleaning schedule, does it include what items and areas that need to be cleaned and how often this should happen. An excellent cleaning resource is available on <http://healthpathways.org.nz/>
 - Remember the influenza virus can remain viable on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours therefore these surfaces e.g. reception, bench tops, doors, door handles, tills, EFTPOS machines, telephones, computer keyboards, etc should be wiped down regularly throughout the day with an appropriate solution or 70% alcohol based wipes.
 - A cost effective option for cleaning is to use a clean disposable cloth and a solution of bleach (prepared daily, 10mls bleach to 500mls water). Ensure the spray nozzle is directed for “squirt” not “spray” to avoid the spread of any potential pathogens.
- **Discuss possible “streaming” options for seeing patients/consumers with ILIs within your facility**
 - You may wish to consider “streaming” patients/consumers who present with flu like symptoms to your facility. We acknowledge that each general practice and pharmacy will adapt, depending on size of facility, nature of the building, the population of the practice/pharmacy, and staff preferences. Suggestions include:
 - Identifying separate waiting areas
 - For general practices consider different times of clinics for flu/non-flu patients
 - Flow of people through the facility – is it possible to arrange this so that people move in one direction rather than coming back past each other?
 - Minimise amount of time in waiting area, e.g. flu patients wait in their cars and are phoned/texted when ready to be taken in/relatives collect prescriptions or home delivery
 - In general practice, if demand exceeds capacity, you may consider delaying non-urgent activities.

Further infection prevention and control information during the influenza season is available from <http://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz/resources/?offset=10>

It is also important that all staff understand and follow your workplace’s written policies and procedures on all aspects of infection prevention and control.