

## **Influenza Preparedness**

### **Centre for Community Health & Disease Control, Maldives**

#### **Guidance on Personal Protection – General**

#### **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 MEASURES**

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

### **USING PPE (Personal Protective Equipments)**

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

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

**AIRSIDE WORKERS**

All airside workers are advised to wear surgical mask if they have to be in close contact (within one metre) with the passengers. Use of gloves and aprons are not recommended for this occupational group.

Follow the hand hygiene measures and general respiratory hygiene etiquettes.

**STAFF WORKING IN THE ARRIVAL TERMINAL**

All the staffs working in the arrival terminal are advised to wear surgical mask if they have to be in close contact (within one metre) with the passengers. Use of gloves and aprons are not recommended for this occupational group.

Ensure hands are kept clean with frequent use of appropriate antiseptic hand rub. Follow the general respiratory hygiene etiquettes.

**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 a 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.

## **HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

Staff caring for guests who is a suspected case\* of influenza A (H1N1) should wear surgical masks, but only when coming into close contact (within one metre) and only if the guest has flu symptoms. Masks need not be worn continuously by staff and should not be seen as a substitute for hand hygiene and other basic precautions.

If staff is concerned about the condition of a guest, or if a guest requests access to medical advice, advise them to contact the in-house doctor or phone NEOC (hotline: 3304829) for advice.

If staff members need to enter the room where a guest suspected of influenza A (H1N1) is present (e.g. to deliver a room service meal), they should avoid close contact (within one metre) with the guest as far as possible, wear surgical mask and clean their hands with soap and water or clean the hands with appropriate antiseptic handrub solutions immediately afterwards.

*Wearing gloves and gowns is not recommended for staff members not in close contact (within one metre) of symptomatic guests.*

\*Refer to the case definition guideline of Centre for Community Health & Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Family. [www.health.gov.mv](http://www.health.gov.mv)

## **JANITORS AND REFUSE COLLECTORS**

### **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.

#Refer to the guidelines of Centre for Community Health & Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Family. [www.health.gov.mv](http://www.health.gov.mv)

### **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 clothes 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.

### Summary Table

	Entry to a patient area but no close contact with patients	Close patient contact (within one metre)	Aerosol generating situations
Hand hygiene	✓	✓	✓
Gloves	✗	✓	✓
Plastic apron	✗	✓	✓
Gown	✗	✗	✓
Surgical mask	✓	✓	✗
High filtration mask	✗	✗	✓
Eye protection	✗	Assess risk <sup>*</sup>	✓

<sup>\*</sup>Eye protection should be considered when there is a risk of contamination of the eyes by splashes and droplets, e.g. by blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.