

Pandemic Influenza

Infection Control Guidelines For Home Healthcare Services



HOME HEALTH AGENCIES SHOULD FOLLOW THE “OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA IN THE HEALTH CARE SETTING”

Contact patients before the home visit to determine whether persons in the household have a flu-like illness:

- Fever above 100° F or 37.8° C
- Cough or sore throat or shortness of breath

If patients with flu symptoms are in the home:

- Delay services which can wait.
- Assign providers who are not at risk for complications of flu to care for these patients.
- Encourage use of a separate room in the home for the flu patient
- Wash your hands every time after you care for your flu patient. Use:
 - Soap and water if your hands are visibly soiled. Dry your hands thoroughly with paper towels.
 - Otherwise, use alcohol-based hand rub
- Wear a mask when less than 3 feet from your patient. Use professional judgment to decide when to put on a mask:
 - Upon entering the house or
 - Only when caring for your patient.
 - Remember:
 - Others in the household may be infectious.
 - The patient may be moving about the whole house.
- Have your patient wear a mask when close to other people
- Your patient should not leave the home until 5 days after the fever is gone
- When going outside the home, have your patient:
 - Wash hands before leaving the house and every time after coughing or sneezing or using tissues
 - Wear a mask
 - Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions
 - Dispose of used tissues in the nearest waste basket after use
 - Cough or sneeze into the upper sleeve, not the hands, if a tissue is not available

Management of other persons in the home:

- Persons other than the primary care-giver should limit contact with your flu patient.
- Discourage unnecessary visitors.

Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program

350 Capitol St, Room 125, Charleston WV 25301-3715

Phone: 304.558.5358 • Fax: 304.558.6335 • www.wvdhhr.org/idep

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Dishes and eating utensils:

- Soiled dishes and eating utensils should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- It is not necessary to separate eating utensils for use by your flu patient.

Laundry

- Laundry can be washed in a washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent
- It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a flu patient from other laundry.
- Handle soiled laundry with care.
- Avoid “hugging” the laundry
- Wash your hands after handling soiled laundry.

Tissues

- Tissues used by your patient should be placed in a bag and disposed of with other household waste.
- Put a trash bag at the bedside.

Cleaning

- The house may be cleaned with regular household cleaning products.