



How to prevent flu in your ward!

During the influenza season, outbreaks of health care-associated influenza affect both patients and personnel.

How is flu transmitted?

Droplet spread - (can be propelled up to 1 metre) from infected persons coughing or sneezing. The droplets may be directly deposited onto the mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tracts

Contact spread - (by touching respiratory droplets on another person or object and then touching own, or another's, mouth or nose before washing hands.)

Studies have shown that human influenza viruses can survive on surfaces for between **2 & 8 hours**.

Who's infectious when?

Adults may be infectious from one day before symptoms and for 3 - 7 days after onset of illness

Children can be infectious for ≥ 10 days, and young children can shed virus for ≤ 6 days before their illness onset.

Severely immunocompromised persons can shed the virus for weeks or months.

How to prevent the spread!

Raise awareness:

Posters instructing patients & visitors to inform staff of respiratory infection symptoms.

Provide tissues for patients & visitors who are coughing or sneezing.

Ensure easy access to hand washing facilities or providing alcohol-based hand rubs

Standard Precautions

Wear gloves if anticipating contact with respiratory secretions or potentially contaminated surfaces

Wear a gown if anticipating soiling of clothes by a patient's respiratory secretions

Droplet Precautions

Single room or cohort with like patients

If patient transport is necessary, have the patient wear a mask.

Unimmunised staff should wear a mask when in close contact with infectious patient.

Restrict Ill Visitors & Staff

Restrict staff movement from areas with outbreaks to other units and buildings.

Vaccinate all health-care personnel.

Encourage visitors to stay at home when ill.

Prevent Influenza during pregnancy!

Pregnant women are at increased risk of hospitalization from influenza complications.

Did you know?

- The flu vax does Influenza vaccination of health-care staff is the primary means of preventing outbreaks
- Over 2500 **Australians** die each year from influenza and its complications.
- The human influenza virus can survive on surfaces for between **2** and **8** hours

Need your flu vax?

Call Infection Control - x 5740 or 6663

Flu Vaccinations commence in March every year

Resources

<http://www.fightflu.gov.au/asp/index.asp>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm>