



# FLU GUIDANCE FOR HOTELS, MOTELS AND B&B'S

## H1N1 PREVENTION: GUIDANCE FOR LODGING MANAGERS

Influenza viruses are spread on respiratory droplets that are expelled into the air when a person coughs or sneezes and are then inhaled by someone else, or fall on a surface where they are picked up by someone else and introduced into their body through their eyes, nose or mouth.

To prevent the spread of viruses, handwashing stations, alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers, tissues and trash receptacles should be made available throughout the facility. Employees should be urged to wash their hands frequently with soap and water.

### Cleaning

Routine cleaning and disinfecting will kill flu viruses. Flu viruses can survive on cloth, paper and tissues for up to 12 hours. Contaminated items such as tissues and paper towels should be immediately thrown away. The virus can survive on hard, non-porous surfaces like stainless steel and plastic for up to 48 hours. Viruses that are left on a stainless steel surface and picked up by a person within 8 hours can lead to infection.

Flu viruses can be destroyed by heat (temperatures above 167°F). They can also be destroyed by several chemical germicides – chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, soap detergents, iodine based antiseptics and alcohol – if used at the proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

Frequently touched surfaces and items should be wiped down routinely. These may include:

- **Lobby area**  
Light switches, door knobs, elevator buttons, handrails, telephones, television remote controls, furniture, vending machines, ice machines.
- **Guest rooms**  
Light switches, door knobs, drawer handles, toilets, television remote controls, sinks, telephones, iron, ironing board, hair dryer, coffee pot, ice bucket, alarm clock and furniture.
- **Food service area**  
Door handles, handrails, tables, chairs, booths, menus, bill folders, highchairs, booster seats, bar area surfaces, restrooms, trash receptacles, dispenser or equipment handles, service trays, office equipment, microphone, cash register, ice scoops, refrigerator and freezer handles, telephone, light switches, thermostats, employee lockers and cleaning supplies.
- **Dining area**  
Door handles, handrails, tables, chairs, booths, menus, bill folders, highchairs, booster seats, bar area.
- **Other facility areas**  
Exercise equipment, computer hardware, lounge furniture and poolside furniture.

Use an EPA-registered disinfectant effective against influenza A viruses and follow these cleaning tips:

- Carefully read and follow directions on the product label.
- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
- Discard gloves after use and wash and/or sanitize hands before and after gloving.
- Remove organic material from the surface to be disinfected and follow normal cleaning procedures.
- Rinse off detergents to avoid diluting or inactivating the disinfectant.
- Follow disinfection of food contact surfaces with a potable water rinse and then a hard surface EPA-registered sanitizer according to label directions.

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## **Laundering**

Routine laundering of bedspreads, towels and other linens is sufficient to kill H1N1 and flu viruses. Housekeeping staff should be encouraged follow these tips:

- Wear disposable gloves when handling linens.
- Be careful not to agitate linens or laundry or hug them to the body when transporting.
- Linens from the room of a person with a flu-like illness do not need to be washed separately.
- Launder linens with standard bleach, soap and hot water and tumble dry on a hot setting.
- Wash hands with soap and water before and after gloving and after handling dirty linens.

## **Food Service**

Dishes and utensils used by a sick person do not need to be washed separately. Wash thoroughly in a dishwasher or by hand with soap and hot water before being re-used. Staff that handle these items before they are washed should immediately wash their hands with soap and water.

## **Employee Illness**

One of the best ways to slow and stop the spread of flu is to keep sick people away from healthy people. Employees with flu-like symptoms (fever, runny or stuffy nose, cough, sore throat, headache or muscle aches, vomiting and diarrhea) should be encouraged to notify a supervisor immediately. Sick employees should stay home and not come back to work until at least 24 hours after their fever has gone away without the help of fever-reducing medication.

Employees that are well, but have a sick family member, may work as usual. They should take normal, everyday precautions, including washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. They should also wear disposable gloves when cleaning. They should be encouraged to monitor their health and notify their supervisor if they begin to feel sick.

Federal regulations require that any person who is sick and has a reasonable risk of contaminating food, food-contact surfaces, or food-packaging materials must be excluded from operations that might allow such contamination until the health condition is resolved. These regulations are contained in the Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food, in Part 110.10 of Title 21 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations: [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_08/21cfr110\\_08.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_08/21cfr110_08.html).

The FDA Food Code also stipulates that employees experiencing persistent sneezing, coughing or a runny nose that causes discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth may not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

## **Guest Illness**

If a guest becomes ill, staff should follow these recommendations:

- Encourage the guest to stay in his room and limit interaction with other people.
- If she must leave the room, consider asking her to wear a facemask, if it is available and comfortable to do so.
- Ask him to cover his cough and sneeze with a tissue or the crook of his arm and wash his hands frequently.
- Refer her to information in her room, provided by the local public health department, entitled "What to do when you think you have the flu" and a map of health care facilities and services in the community.
- Limit the amount of time employees spend in the room until the guest has checked out.
- When the guest checks out, housekeeping staff should clean the room, using care to disinfect surfaces and items that may have been contaminated. Linens should also be laundered following standard laundering guidelines.

Contact your local public health department for additional guidance or consultation.