e-Compliance Training

Influenza Safety - September 2019

THIS TRAINING SESSION IS RECOMMENDED FOR:

This training session is recommended for all healthcare workers (administrative and clinical).

Training Objectives

The objectives for this training session are to:

- Review symptoms of influenza and means of transmission;
- Identify influenza safety and prevention strategies in healthcare facilities; and
- Preview the 2019-2020 influenza season and vaccine recommendations.

Identifying Influenza

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious complications can result in hospitalization or death. Older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions are at high risk of serious flu complications.

There are two main types of seasonal influenza (flu) virus: Types A and B. The influenza A and B viruses that routinely spread in people (human influenza viruses) are responsible for seasonal flu outbreaks each year. Over the course of a flu season, different types (A & B) and subtypes (influenza A) of influenza circulate and cause illness.

An influenza outbreak can cause lost workforce productivity and put a strain on health services. Antiviral drugs are available for treatment, though influenza viruses can develop drug-resistance.

Contagiousness and Transmission

Seasonal influenza spreads easily, with rapid transmission in crowded areas. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, droplets containing viruses (infectious droplets) are dispersed into the air and are spread to persons nearby who breathe these droplets in. The virus can also be spread when hands contaminated with influenza viruses touch a person's eyes, nose or mouth. People with flu can spread it to others up to about 6 feet away. Recent studies show that influenza virus is present in air when an infected person simply breathes.

People with influenza are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after illness begins. Most healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than 7 days. You can transmit flu to someone else before you know you are sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus.

2019-2020 Flu Season

Flu viruses are constantly changing, and it is not unusual for new viruses to appear each year. Also, the timing, severity and length of flu season are different

Interactive Training Reminder

Compliance Training is an interactive training program in which you can address questions with other staff members or supervisors to obtain clarification for situations in your work setting.

Write down any questions that you have about the training topic and address them with your Training Coordinator or supervisor.

every year. Flu outbreaks can happen as early as October and can last until May. During the past flu season (2018-2019), national flu activity peaked around mid-February. The 2018-2019 season was less severe in general, with fewer total flu hospitalizations and fewer deaths than the extreme 2017-2018 season.

The composition of U.S. flu vaccines is reviewed annually and updated to match circulating flu viruses. Flu vaccines protect against the three or four viruses that research suggests will be most common. For 2019-2020, trivalent (three-component) vaccines are recommended to contain:

- A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus (updated)
- A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus (updated)
- B/Colorado/06/2017-like (Victoria lineage) virus

Quadrivalent (four-component) vaccines, which protect against a second lineage of B viruses, are recommended to contain:

- the three viruses above, plus B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus.

Signs and Symptoms

The following signs and symptoms are common to influenza infection. It important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever, nor will everyone experience all of the symptoms. Symptoms generally begin 1 to 4 days after the virus enters the body.

- Fever/chills
- Cough (usually dry)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle, body or joint aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children.

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but are caused by different viruses. Because they have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between cold and flu based on symptoms alone. In general, flu is more severe than the common cold, and symptoms are more intense. The flu is different from a cold in that it usually has a sudden onset. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. People with the flu are more likely to have fever and headache. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, while flu can have very serious associated complications.

Treatment

If the person is not at high risk for complications, home care is recommended. This includes avoiding contact with others, resting, drinking plenty of fluids, and taking over the counter medicines for relief of symptoms. Persons at high risk for complications should see their doctor at the onset of symptoms, because anti-viral medication may be indicated. Anti-virals can reduce the duration and severity of flu and may also reduce the risk of complications.

Influenza Prevention Measures

Vaccination

The CDC indicates that the best way to prevent seasonal influenza is to get vaccinated every year. Annual vaccination should begin soon after flu vaccine is available, and ideally by October. However, getting vaccinated even later can be protective. In addition, even if you do get influenza, it may be milder if you've had the vaccine, and there is a reduced risk of complications. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop, so it is best to get vaccinated before influenza activity begins.

Healthcare workers are at higher risk for contracting influenza, so it is especially important for you to receive the influenza vaccine each year. Annual seasonal influenza vaccination will also help to prevent you from exposing patients to influenza.

Precautions

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others (six feet if possible) to protect them from getting sick.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Workers should not report to work until 24 hours after their fever ends (100 degrees Fahrenheit or lower), without the use of medication.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and instruct patients to do the same. If you are unable to use a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not your hands.
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Refer to the section "Hand Hygiene" below for more detailed information.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially during flu season when patients and coworkers may be spreading influenza and other viruses.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, try to manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Preparedness

Monitor flu activity in your community by checking with state and local health departments. This can be accomplished by checking state, local and CDC web sites. Regular updates on influenza activity are published.

Actively screen patients, staff, and visitors for flu-like symptoms upon entry to the facility when flu activity increases in your community. When scheduling appointments, instruct patients and persons who accompany them to inform you upon arrival if they have any flu symptoms and to take appropriate preventive measures (e.g., wear a facemask upon entry, follow triage procedure).

During periods of increased influenza activity:

Take steps to minimize elective visits by patients with suspected or confirmed influenza. For example, if you provide primary care, consider establishing procedures to minimize visits by patients seeking care for mild influenza-like illness who are not at increased risk for complications (e.g., provide telephone consultation to determine

if there is a medical need to visit the facility). If you are a specialty practice, encourage patients with influenza to reschedule their appointments with no penalty.

During Visits

- Take steps to ensure all persons with symptoms of a respiratory infection adhere to respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, hand hygiene, and triage procedures throughout their visit. These might include:
  - Posting visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic places (e.g., waiting areas, elevators, cafeterias) to provide patients and HCP with instructions about respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. The posting should include:
    * How to use facemasks or tissues to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and to dispose of contaminated items in waste receptacles.
    * How and when to perform hand hygiene.
  - Implementing procedures during patient registration that facilitate adherence to appropriate precautions (e.g., at the time of check-in, inquire about presence of symptoms of a respiratory infection, and if present, provide instructions).
- Provide facemasks to patients with signs and symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Provide supplies to perform hand hygiene to all patients (e.g., at check-in desk, in waiting rooms, etc.).
- Provide space and encourage persons with symptoms of respiratory infections to sit as far away from others as possible. If available, facilities may wish to place these patients in a separate waiting area.

Hand Hygiene

Handwashing is an important precaution in preventing influenza infection. However, hand hygiene measures are not a replacement or alternative to other prevention measures, such as vaccination.

Washing hands with soap and water is usually the best way to reduce the number of germs on them:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Hand sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and are not as effective when hands are visibly soiled. However, if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to reduce the number of germs on hands until they may be washed with soap and water:

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

e-Compliance Training Test

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E

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ STAFF POSITION: _____

Return your test to your supervisor or Compliance Coordinator upon completion. Individual tests will be maintained to document participation and understanding of the information. Review the training information to find the correct answers to any questions that may have been missed.

1 People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. People with the flu are more likely to have fever and headache.

Select One **T** **F**

2 People with flu can spread it to others up to about 9 feet away.

Select One **T** **F**

3 The CDC indicates that the single best way to prevent influenza infection is to take vitamins regularly during flu season.

Select One **T** **F**

4 If you've had the influenza vaccine and you still get the flu, your symptoms may be less severe, and the risk of complications is reduced.

Select One **T** **F**

5 When hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not as effective at reducing the number of germs on hands as washing with soap and water.

Select One **T** **F**

6 It takes about four weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop.

Select One **T** **F**

7 Hand washing is more effective than the influenza vaccine at preventing transmission of influenza viruses.

Select One **T** **F**

8 During flu season, you should actively screen patients, staff, and visitors for flu-like symptoms at every point of entry to the facility.

Select One **T** **F**

9 When ill with influenza, workers should not report to work until 24 hours after their fever ends (100 degrees Fahrenheit or lower), without the use of medication.

Select One **T** **F**

10 Provide facemasks to patients with signs and symptoms of respiratory infection and ask them to wear the mask for the duration of their visit.

Select One **T** **F**

Click Here to Take Your Quiz