



To reduce the spread of flu and other viruses, there are certain measures – such as hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette, staying home when ill, and appropriate environmental cleaning practices – that can prevent or reduce the spread of flu like illnesses.

Recommended infection prevention and control practices

To reduce the spread of influenza, including seasonal flu and other viruses, ***the following infection prevention and control practices are to be implemented at all MIOTC sites.***

1) Hand Sanitizing

- Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with 60-90% alcohol, should be placed at the entrance to the shelter and at all common areas such as refreshment tables (to be supplied by MIOTC).
- Volunteers at the registration desk must ensure that all *clients, volunteers, and visitors* sanitize their hands *every time they enter the shelter.*
- Sites should consider having a separate volunteer stationed at the door responsible for asking everyone to sanitize their hands (see attached questions to ask clients).
- Post signs at the entrance instructing people to sanitize their hands.
- Hand washing facilities/washrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that running water, a supply of soap in a dispenser, and paper towels or hand dryers are always available and accessible for use.

2) Screening

- Not all respiratory illness is influenza. Seasonal flu and other viruses have similar symptoms. It is important to be aware of the symptoms and prevent the spread of germs.
- Routine *screening of clients should be done when they register* or enter the shelter. A volunteer at the registration desk should be assigned to *ask clients the following two questions:*
 1. Is the client experiencing flu-like symptoms (Fever, Cough, Sore Throat, Joint Pain/Weakness)? If the client is experiencing Fever and Cough, they should be *given a mask and sent to an isolated area.*
 2. If the client does not have flu-like symptoms, ask if the client has been exposed to anyone with these symptoms in the past week. If so, the client can enter the shelter but volunteers should monitor the client closely for signs of illness.
- Clients will also be screened at Finch Subway Station by security staff. If clients at the station are identified as ill, they should be given a mask and asked to sit in the front seat of the van or away from others on the van.

3) Isolation

- Place clients with flu symptoms in a single room or separate area. If there are not enough rooms, consider placing all clients with symptoms in the same room.
- Clients should be served meals and other services in their separate area and not in common areas.
- If possible, consider identifying an area with separate toilets and sinks for ill clients. If communal washrooms are used, ensure that the facilities are cleaned frequently.

4) Layout of Sleeping Areas

- In shared sleeping areas, arrange mattresses so that *clients lie head to toe*. Volunteers should monitor sleeping areas and ensure clients are sleeping head to toe. Security staff should also be asked to monitor sleeping areas.
- Creating temporary physical barriers between mattresses such as chairs.
- Keep mattresses 2 feet apart.
- *There is to be no sharing of mattresses or joining of mattresses even by couples.*

5) Environmental Cleaning

- The influenza virus can survive for 8 to 48 hours on different surfaces. Frequent cleaning of surfaces/items commonly touched can help reduce spread of the virus. The influenza virus is easily killed by cleaning with commercially available cleaning products and does not require special cleaning agents or disinfectants.
- Volunteers must clean high traffic areas such as:
 - Push bars on doors
 - Light switches
 - Taps and sinks
 - Door handles
 - Handrails in the stairwells
 - Fridge handles
 - Counters including reception areas, meal tables, clothing facilities, etc

6) Volunteers to Stay Home When Ill

- It is important that volunteers are aware of the signs and symptoms of H1N1. Volunteers who develop signs and symptoms of H1N1 or other flu viruses should stay home until they no longer have a fever and are feeling well.
- Team leaders should monitor volunteers for signs of illness and ask volunteers to stay home until they are well.

7) Coughing and Sneezing Etiquette

- Volunteers should encourage clients to cover their cough or sneeze by sneezing into their forearm/shoulder and NOT the hands, or by using a tissue to cover their cough or sneeze.
- Tissues should be immediately discarded after use and hands should be washed.
- Keep tissue boxes at the registration desk and in common areas.