# 03.26 Infection Control in the Emergency Department for Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs)

Purpose

To prevent transmission of an EID between patients, between healthcare workers (HCWs) and between patients and healthcare workers in the Emergency Department (ED)

Audience

Healthcare workers (HCWs) and administrative staff who have patient contact

Policy Statements

I. Screening patients in the ED for an EID

A. The Patient Service Representative (PSR) located across from the ED elevators on the second floor of the ED will wear a face shield and will perform the initial screening of incoming patients.

1. THE PSR will ask each patient the following question:

   a. *Do you or anyone with you have fever, cough or sore throat?*
   b. Persons who have ≥ 1 of these symptoms will be given a mask.
   c. They will be asked to apply an alcohol handrub to their hands.
   d. The patient will be sent to a section of chairs near the triage stations which will be reserved for patients to be screened for influenza

2. Triage

   a. Triage personnel will wear gowns.
   b. When a patient(s) appears in the section reserved for patients being triaged for swine influenza, each patient should be wearing a mask.
   c. In addition to their gowns, triage personnel will wear a face shield or a mask (see Policy 3.28 for type of mask) and goggles when triaging patients for influenza.
   d. When patients enter the triage cubicles, the triage personnel should check to make sure that the mask is tight and have the patient apply an alcohol hand rub.
   e. After each patient is triaged, the triage personnel should apply an alcohol hand rub.

3. If the triage personnel cannot rule out influenza, while continuing to wear a face shield or surgical mask and goggles, and gown, the triage personnel will escort the patient to the next location for further assessment.

B. If a patient screens negative at the receptionist's desk but appears to have an influenza-like-illness (ILI) on arrival at the triage cubicle, the triage personnel should immediately apply a surgical mask to the patient and ask the patient to apply an alcohol handrub. If the patient is subsequently given a clinical diagnosis of influenza, if not vaccinated with 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine ≥ 14 days, the triage personnel should immediately contact the Department of Healthcare Epidemiology at 772-3192 or pager (409) 643-3133 for prophylaxis.

II. Patients triaged to the nurse practitioner (NP)

A. When patients, with presumed influenza, are escorted to the nurse practitioner's exam room, the NP will don full PPE:

1. Goggles and mask (see Policy 3.28 for type of mask)
2. Gown
3. Gloves

B. If the NP is seeing another patient when the triaged patient is escorted to the NP's exam room, the patient, while still wearing a mask, will be seated in the nearby waiting room. If there is more than one patient in the waiting room, they should be seated 3-6 feet apart.

C. The NP may have the patient remove the mask during the examination but the mask must be replaced prior to the patient leaving the room.

D. After visiting the NP, the patient will be brought to the Financial Counselor wearing a mask. The Financial Counselor will be in full PPE (see Policy 3.28 for type of mask).

E. Patients who need to be seen by a provider will be escorted to the META while wearing their mask.

III. Patients to be evaluated in the META

A. When patients with presumed influenza are escorted to the META, they will be placed in an examination room with the door closed.

B. If all exam rooms are occupied when the patient arrives at the META, the patient will be escorted to the waiting room. Patients should be seated 3-6 feet apart.

C. A nurse who enters an exam room to do a general assessment (questions for patient, no physical contact) need only wear a face shield.

D. When a patient is to be examined by a provider, full PPE will be worn.
   1. Goggles and mask (see Policy 3.28 for type of mask)
   2. Gown
   3. Gloves

IV. Patients triaged as level 1, 2 or 3 with presumed influenza will enter the ED.

A. Patients seen in the ED will be placed on All Barrier Precautions (ABP) and an ABP sign will be placed on the door to the exam room.

   1. Goggles and mask (see Policy 3.28 for type of mask)
   2. Gown
   3. Gloves

B. All persons who enter the exam room will wear full PPE

C. When the patient leaves the room, all surfaces with which the patient has come into contact will be cleaned and disinfected with a hospital-grade detergent disinfectant.

V. Ambulance Desk

The UTMB dispatcher will be notified by the EMS if a patient who is being transported to UTMB has signs and symptoms of influenza. If so, the personnel at the triage desk will don full PPE for the arrival of the patient on the ambulance.

VI. Discharge

If the patient has been discharged with the diagnosis of swine influenza, they will be given a mask upon discharge. They will be escorted to the discharge area and the financial screeners who see the patient will be wearing a goggles and a mask (see policy 3.28 for type of mask).