



Canadian Red Cross

1.877.356.3226 | www.redcross.ca/flu

Q&A

Questions & Answers

*An Introduction to the Prevention of Disease
Transmission for Canadian Workplaces Webcast*

November 8 and 9, 2007

Q1

Our Company is involved in transportation and our truck drivers are out daily performing assigned deliveries and freight pick up. How can we protect them from the flu and prevent the transmission of the flu from the many places they deliver back to the workplace where they are in contact with other drivers and others working in the offices?

Answer:

If exposure cannot be prevented or minimized in any other way (i.e., by engineered or administrative controls), then the employer is required to provide personal protective equipment as the last line of defence to protect worker health and safety.

It is important to note that local health authorities will be in a position to provide the most updated information with regards to effective personal protective equipment guidelines at the time of an influenza pandemic.

An important thing employers can do immediately is to reinforce the following messages with their personnel:

- Wash your hands often, using plenty of soap and warm water
- Cover your mouth when you cough
- Sneeze in your sleeve
- If you become sick, stay at home
- Talk to your health care provider about the annual flu shot

Q2

We own buses and are organizing trips across Canada and the United States. What should we do if someone in a bus has the flu?

Answer:

Businesses should contact their local health authority to discuss what surveillance mechanisms are in place and what would be expected of them locally.



Q3

We are electricians and major appliance servicers, we are constantly in and out of people residences. Should we have a contingency for absolutely not going to work for the period of the flu outbreak?

Answer:

Businesses should develop a plan for how they can address/mitigate the risk of exposure.

There is lots of information on Personal Preparedness Equipment (PPE) available on various websites but a starting point would be to contact their local municipal government to determine what is being done, what government expectations are of local businesses and how they may choose to work within that framework.

As well, they can start communicating with their customers to determine what their customers' expectations might be to help guide them in the development of their contingency plan.

You may want to develop a questionnaire to administer before reporting to calls during a pandemic and also ensure that workers have appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (as recommended by local public health) with required training (i.e.: fit testing for N95 masks, training on how to wear protective eye wear, etc).

Q4

What are the personal protection equipment (i.e. N95 (and fit-testing?) gloves, gown, goggles) recommendations for trained first aiders assisting potentially infectious employees in the workplace?

Answer:

Currently, information is being developed regarding the effectiveness of PPE because of the unknown nature of the actual virus that will cause a pandemic influenza outbreak.

The Center for Disease Control is a good place to obtain information about PPE recommendations and also to speak with your local health authorities regarding PPE as they will be the ones to establish standards for your community.

Q5

I would like to stockpile pandemic supplies for my company - such as hand sanitizers and workplace cleaning materials. Shelf life is obviously important, and so is cost. What kinds of hand sanitizers do you recommend? What kind of general cleaners (e.g., isopropyl alcohol, quats, hydrogen peroxide, bleach, etc.?)

Answer:

The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety has a number of recommendations for the use of hand sanitizer and general cleaners for the workplace:

www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/good_hygiene.html

Information on the use of hand sanitizers is also listed here:

<http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1138724359598&pagename=CHN-RCS%2FCHNResource%2FCHNResourcePageTemplate&lang=En&c=CHNResource>



Q6

Recent studies show that Tamiflu is best taken before 24 hours after onset of symptoms, not 48. How is Canada going being able to manage that tight time frame?

Answer:

This is a question best answered by the professionals in this field which includes the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pikf_e.html

Q7

Does the Red Cross offer any training materials/courses/consulting for business and staff planning?

Answer:

The Canadian Red Cross does not offer any training, courses or consulting services in business continuity planning.

Numerous resources are available to support businesses with their business continuity plan and pandemic plan development. Resources that are available to help in this undertaking include:

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/gds/bcp-eng.aspx

nonprofitrisk.org/tools/business-continuity/business-continuity.shtml

<http://www.cme-mec.ca/national/media.asp?id=698>

As we said during the webcast, simple steps include preparing your family to face this type of situation as well as your business. Here are a few sites that can help your employees plan for their family's preparedness:

www.getprepared.gc.ca/src/src_e.asp

www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=020578&tid=025

Q8

Is 25% of the population an accurate estimate of those that will be affected by the pandemic?

Answer:

Canadian Government Pandemic Plan as well as the World Health Organization state that 25 % is the planning assumption used to estimate the number of people that will become ill during a pandemic flu outbreak. Please refer to these websites for more information:

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic10things/en/index.html>



Q9

Our Company is giving our Flu Shot on December 4th, we are located in Montreal. Is this date too late in the flu season since it starts every October?

Answer:

Ideally the flu shot should be given in mid November for maximum impact and effectiveness, but early in December is still helpful.

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07vol33/acs-07/index_e.html

Q10

In your webcast, you mention a study that exists to forecast absenteeism due to illness. Where can I get a copy?

Answer:

Please refer to slide 9 of the following presentation:

www.ida.ca/Files/IndIssues/BusContPlan/BCPFluPandemic_en.pdf

Q11

We've heard that a bird flu vaccine has been developed and is currently being tested - is this true?

Answer:

Please see the following websites for information for the latest information:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/avian-aviare_e.html

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html

Q12

What recommendations to you have for cleaning areas in public buildings such as stair railings, door handles, etc.

Answer:

Office cleanliness is every employee's responsibility. Keeping your work space clean is vital to your health and to that of others.

Washing your hands often is important; cleaning your telephone receiver and keyboards is also a central step to reducing your impact on workplace health. As we discussed in our presentation, germs can live on surfaces for 24-48 hours so it is important to keep your work area clean.

Common areas should be wiped down at least each night by the cleaners if possible and keeping hand sanitizers near office equipment is a great way to encouraging frequent hand sanitization.



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Q13

Does provincial health and safety legislation require employers to establish programs to prevent the spread of flu?

Answer:

Please check with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety websites for relevant information on this topic.

www.ccohs.ca

www.canoshweb.org

Q14

I have heard that non alcohol based hand sanitizers may not be as efficient as they claim in their advertisements. Will they be effective in a pandemic flu?

Answer:

Please refer to this website for more information:

http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/washing_hands.html

Q15

What is the current status of Bill C-12 that aims to update the Quarantine Act; is it still proposed?

Answer:

Please refer to the Parliament of Canada's website to check progression of Bill C-12:

www.parl.gc.ca

Q16

How do you know when a pandemic has hit? Not a definition, but the actual pandemic.

Answer:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a 6 phase pandemic alert system. They notify governments of the change from one phase to the next and maintain on-going surveillance. For more information on the WHO global surveillance system, see the following link:

www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/influenzanetwork/en/index.html



Q17

Is there a law you can refer me to that talks about the restriction of a company to send home, or restrict entry to the business?

Answer:

Please check with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety websites for relevant information on this topic.

www.ccohs.ca

www.canoshweb.org

Q18

Is there existing legislation that defines individual responsibility to keep themselves or their workspaces reasonably hygienic?

Answer:

Please check with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety websites for relevant information on this topic.

www.ccohs.ca

www.canoshweb.org

Q19

Once you contract the flu, at what stage do you become infectious and how long do you continue to be infectious?

Answer:

You are infectious from the onset of symptoms, and potentially prior. Adults with influenza remain infectious for 3 to 5 days after onset of symptoms, and children remain infectious for up to a week after onset: www.chica.org/links_flu.html#INFORMATION

Q20

What works better to kill germs and prevent the spread of diseases – soap and water OR the no water needed gels?

Answer:

The Canadian Red Cross recommends washing your hands with plenty of soap and warm water. In instances when that facility is not available, gels can be effective. Please refer to this website for more information. www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/washing_hands.html



Q21

At what age can a child get the flu shot?

Answer:

Please talk to your family doctor as to when it would be safe for your child to receive the flu shot. Some general guidance can be found at:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/flu-grippe_e.html

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07vol33/acs-07/index_e.html

Q22

Can a pregnant woman get the flu shot?

Answer:

Yes – the flu vaccine is safe during pregnancy but we strongly recommend that you speak with your family doctor. Some general guidance can be found at:

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07vol33/acs-07/index_e.html

Q23

Is there a City of Toronto “flu shot” location listing? If so where can we find it?

Answer:

Some provincial governments such as Ontario are conducting a flu shot campaign. Please refer to their respective websites. For Toronto specifically, please use: www.toronto.ca/health/flu/index.htm

Q24

My two children are at school and daycare what can I do to prevent them from catching the flu?

Answer:

The Canadian Red Cross recommends that all Canadians do the following to help prevent all disease transmission including seasonal and pandemic influenza:

- Wash their hands often, using plenty of soap and warm water
- Cover their mouth when they cough
- Sneeze in their sleeve
- If they become sick, they should stay at home
- Talk to their health care provider about the annual flu shot



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Teaching children these simple steps will help reduce the likelihood of catching and spreading the influenza virus. You might want to speak to the principal/head teacher to discuss if there are any lessons being taught to children regarding personal hygiene and sneezing/coughing etiquette.

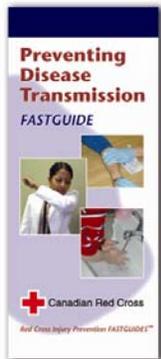
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The Canadian Red Cross offers a menu of **First Aid & CPR courses** for both workplaces and communities. All courses meet the latest International ECC/CPR Guidelines and are reviewed and endorsed by the Canadian Red Cross National Medical Advisory Committee, whose members are Emergency Physicians from across the country.

Our courses include a module on Prevention of Disease Transmission that provides an overview of how diseases are transmitted and steps that can be taken to reduce risks.

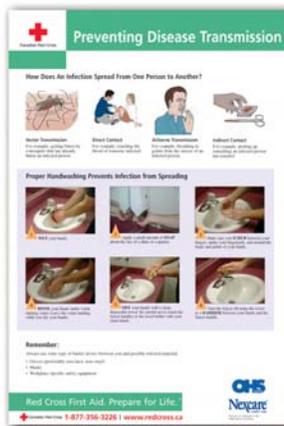
For more information about how to schedule Red Cross First Aid & CPR Training please call 1.877.356.3226 or visit www.redcross.ca/firstaid.

Canadian Red Cross offers a number of **products** that may be of interest for your workplace or as a personal matter. **For more information about how to order these products please call 1.877.356.3226.**



Prevention of Disease Transmission FastGuide

English and French versions
Folded in 6 panels
4 colour
Size: 3-3/4" x 8-3/4" (folded)
ISBN: 978-1-55104-489-7



Prevention of Disease Transmission Poster

Bilingual, double-sided
4-colour
Size: 60.96 cm x 91.44 cm (24" x 36")
ISBN: 1-58480-356-8



Disaster Preparedness Kit

Designed for natural disaster situations, it contains a flashlight, batteries, radio and fluorescent SOS signal. The spacious design allows the user to fit in other necessary items. 29 x 16.5 x 14 cm (11.5 x 6.5 x 5.5 in)