

Annex 4~F: Novel Influenza Virus Public Health Case and Contact Management Fact Sheets and Letters

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Home Isolation Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is for people who have been placed under home isolation and their caregivers.

Q.1. What is isolation?

A. Isolation means keeping people who have an illness away from healthy people and restricting their movements to stop the spread of an illness.

Q.2. Why is home isolation needed?

A. Home isolation is needed to prevent or limit the spread of the influenza germ to other people.

Q.3. What should I do when I am in home isolation?

A. Here are the precautions you should follow.

- Remain at home in a separate room away from others for whichever time is longer:
 - 5 days from the day your symptoms began
 - OR
 - until you no longer have symptoms
 Public Health will let you know when it is time to end isolation.
- Keep the door of the room closed and the window open, if possible.
- Do not leave your house for the 5 days (unless you are seeking medical care).
- Do not accept any visitors.
- Avoid any direct contact with others in your home.
- Wear a mask when you are in the same room with another family member. (Public Health Services will provide masks and instructions on how to use them.)
- Change your mask at least twice a day. Family members do not need to wear masks unless they are told to do so.
- Wash your hands often. Public Health will give you information on how to wash your hands properly.

- Promptly throw away any tissues or any articles that come in contact with fluid from your nose, mouth, or eyes. Household cleaning products can be used to clean items that cannot be thrown away.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, drinking cups, cutlery, toothbrush, etc. Other family members can use dishes and cutlery that are properly washed in hot soapy water. They do not need to be thrown away.
- Monitor your health.
 - Take your temperature twice a day at least 4 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medicine (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen).
 - Note if you have a cough and what it's like (Is it a dry cough? Are you coughing anything up?)
 - Note if you are short of breath or have difficulty breathing
- If your condition worsens and you become sicker, you should call your physician or the hospital emergency department. Tell them that you are in isolation for influenza, that your condition is getting worse and that you plan to come to the emergency department. Follow their advice and keep your mask on during travel to the hospital. If you have to call an ambulance, tell them about your condition as well.

Q.4. What if a household member develops symptoms?

A. They should call their physician or the emergency department if they develop a cough and a fever over 38 degrees C (100.4 degrees F) and one or more of the following symptoms

- sore throat
- joint aches
- muscles aches
- severe weakness or fatigue

They should say that they are a household contact of a person in isolation for influenza. They should follow instructions provided by the emergency department and put on a mask during travel to the hospital.

Q.5. Do family members of individuals who are in isolation need to stay home?

A. Family members of people who are in isolation may be asked to stay at home. They will be contacted by Public Health with instructions.

Q.6. Will any health-care worker contact me during my isolation?

A. Yes. a public health nurse will contact you once a day. If a home visit is required, a public health nurse will make a visit.

Q.7. What precautions will the public health nurse take?

A. The public health nurse will wear a mask while in the same room with you. You should wear a surgical mask during the visit.

Q.8. What do I do if I have questions or concerns?

A. Call your local public health office between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm if you have questions or concerns. After hours or on weekends, contact your physician or the local emergency department if your symptoms get worse. For more information about influenza, see the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection website (www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/ocmoh/flu.htm).

Quarantine Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is for people who have been placed under quarantine and their families.

Q.1. What is quarantine?

- A. Quarantine means restricting the activities of people who are well, but who have been exposed to an illness during the time when the infection can be spread. This is called its period of communicability.

Q.2. Why is quarantine needed?

- A. Quarantine is needed to limit public movement of people who may have been exposed to influenza to prevent them from infecting others.

Q.3. Why do I have to stay home for 3 days?

- A. It can take up to 3 days from the time someone is infected with influenza to the start of symptoms. This is the incubation period. If you have not developed symptoms within 3 days from your last exposure to a person with influenza, Public Health officials will tell you when to end your quarantine.

Q.4. What should I do when I am in quarantine?

- A. Remain at home for 3 days after your last exposure or contact with a person with influenza. Do not leave your house and do not allow people to visit you. Monitor your health in the following ways:

- Take your temperature twice a day. If you take fever-reducing medicine (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen), wait 4 hours before taking your temperature.
- Note if you have a cough and what it's like (Is it a dry cough? Are you coughing anything up?).
- Note if you are short of breath or have difficulty breathing.

Call your physician or the nearest emergency department if you develop a cough and a fever over 38 degrees C (100.4 degrees F) and one or more of the following symptoms:

- sore throat
- joint aches
- muscles aches
- severe weakness or fatigue

Q.5. Should members of my family stay at home while I am in quarantine?

A. No. Family members of healthy people who are quarantined do not need to stay home. There is no risk of them spreading influenza. If the entire family has been in contact with a case, they will all need to be quarantined.

Q.6. Will any health-care worker contact me during my quarantine?

A. Yes. A public health nurse will contact you once a day. If a home visit is required, a public health nurse will make a visit.

Q.7. What do I do if I have questions or concerns?

A. Call your local public health office between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm if you have questions or concerns. For more information about influenza, see the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection website (www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/ocmoh/flu.htm).

Fact Sheet for Care Providers at Home

The person who is sick should stay isolated at home following the directions of Public Health until they are told that this is no longer necessary.

Isolate the sick person

If possible, only the person who is taking care of the sick person should stay with them. The sick person should stay in one room with the door closed and with the window open, if possible. Other members of the family should stay away from the sick person. They should not handle or share things such as dishes until the care provider has cleaned them thoroughly. Discourage any visits from people who do not live in the house.

Hand washing is important

Everyone in the household should wash their hands often using soap and warm water. The person who is sick should cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands immediately after. The care provider should wash their hands immediately after providing care to the sick person. Waterless hand wash agents can also be used.

Wear masks

Influenza is spread by close contact. The person caring for the sick person should wear a mask. The sick person should always wear a mask if they leave their room or if another person is in the room with them. Anyone going in to the room should put on a mask before entering. You will be given a supply of masks and be told how to use them.

Keep things clean

- Wash the sick person's bed sheets, towels, and clothes in warm water. They can be washed with items belonging to other household members.
- The sick person should put used tissues directly into the garbage. It can be put out with the regular garbage.
- Clean surfaces and items inside the sick person's room with regular household cleansers. Clean items handled by the sick person as soon as you remove them from the sick person's room. Wash dishes, cutlery, and glasses in soap and warm water or in the dishwasher.

Care in the home

The sick person should follow the usual guidelines for taking care of themselves when ill. Rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and pain. Taking cough medicine, decongestants, and/or sore throat lozenges may help to relieve symptoms.

Take the sick person's temperature at least twice a day with a thermometer. Write the temperature down. If the sick person is taking acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil), wait at least 4 hours after the last dose before taking their temperature.

When to call for help

Public Health will call to check on the sick person's condition. If the symptoms worsen, including increased shortness of breath or fever, call your doctor for instructions.

Call Public Health immediately if other members of the household start to feel unwell and develop a fever or cough or any other respiratory symptoms.

Letter from the Medical Officer of Health to a Case Recommending Home Isolation

Dear _____

It has been reported to me that you are under investigation for a novel influenza virus. Influenza is a communicable disease that is spread to others through close contact. It can lead to very serious illness.

In consultation with your physician, I am recommending that you remain isolated in your home until I advise you otherwise. The time period that you must remain in isolation depends on how quickly you recover from your illness.

I have included some information on influenza and on home isolation. Public Health staff will gladly answer any questions you may have.

It is extremely important that you remain in isolation at home until advised otherwise.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Letter from the Medical Officer of Health to a Case Requiring Home Isolation Who Is Not in Compliance

Dear _____

It has been reported to me that you are under investigation for a novel influenza virus. I wrote to you on (insert date) requesting that you remain in isolation at home voluntarily until you are advised otherwise.

It has come to my attention that you have not voluntarily isolated yourself. Influenza is a communicable disease that is spread to others through close contact. As you know, it can lead to very serious illness. I have included some information on influenza, and Public Health staff will gladly answer any questions you may have.

It is extremely important that you remain in isolation at home until advised otherwise. Therefore, I am requesting you to remain in isolation as directed.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Letter from the Medical Officer of Health to a Contact Requesting Home Quarantine

Dear _____

It has been reported to me that you have been in contact with a novel influenza virus. In consultation with your physician, we are recommending that you remain in quarantine in your home until I advise you otherwise. You should remain in quarantine for 3 days after your last exposure to influenza.

Influenza is a communicable disease that is spread to others through close contact. It can lead to very serious illness. I have included some information on influenza and on home quarantine. Public Health staff will gladly answer any questions you may have.

It is extremely important that you remain in quarantine at home until advised otherwise.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Letter from the Medical Officer of Health to a Contact Requiring Home Quarantine Who Is Not in Compliance

Dear _____

It has been reported to me that you have been in contact with a case of a novel influenza virus. I wrote to you on (insert date) requesting that you remain in quarantine at home voluntarily until you are advised otherwise.

It has come to my attention that you have not voluntarily quarantined yourself. Influenza is a communicable disease that is spread to others through close contact. It can lead to very serious illness. I have included some information on influenza, and Public Health staff will gladly answer any questions you may have.

It is extremely important that you remain in quarantine at home until advised otherwise. Therefore, I am requesting you to remain in quarantine as directed.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Sincerely,