

Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

General Directorate for Infection Prevention and Control	Section: Dental
Policy Title: Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette	Policy Number: 07
Effective Date: 6/10/2013	Review Date: 6/10/2016

1. POLICY STATEMENT:

1.1. Applies to what is the best practice in Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.

2. PURPOSE:

2.1. To prevent/minimize the risk of infection in dental settings.

2.2. To promote awareness for each dental personnel in the importance of Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.

2.3. To provide a framework for the education of dental healthcare personnel in the infection prevention and control.

3. SCOPE:

3.1. This policy applies to all dental healthcare personnel.

4. DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS:

4.1. **Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette:** a Policy used to prevent the transmission of respiratory infections in the facility, the following infection prevention measures are implemented for all potentially infected persons at the point of entry and continuing throughout the duration of the visit. This applies to any person (e.g., patients and accompanying family members, caregivers, and visitors) with signs and symptoms of respiratory illness, including cough, congestion, rhinorrhea, or increased production of respiratory secretions.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

5.1. All healthcare workers have responsibility to conform and respect all aspects of this policy.

5.2. Managers/ department heads have a key responsibility to ensure their department functions within the parameters of the policy and that staff are trained and assessed in these issues.

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6. PROCEDURE:

6.1. Identifying persons with potential respiratory infection:

- 6.1.1. Facility staff should remain alert for any persons arriving with symptoms of a respiratory infection.
- 6.1.2. Signs are posted at the reception area instructing patients and accompanying persons to:
- Self-report symptoms of a respiratory infection during registration.
 - Practice respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (technique described below) and wear facemask as needed.

6.2. Availability of Supplies:

- 6.2.1. The following supplies are provided in the reception area and other common waiting areas:
- Facemasks, tissues, and no-touch waste receptacles for disposing of used tissues.
 - Dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub.

6.3. Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette:

- 6.3.1. All persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection (including facility staff) are instructed to:
- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
 - Dispose of the used tissue in the nearest waste receptacle.
 - Perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials. **(Refer to Appendix C).**

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6.4. Masking and Separation of Persons with Respiratory Symptoms

6.4.1. If patient calls ahead:

- Have patients with symptoms of a respiratory infection come at a time when the facility is less crowded or through a separate entrance, if available.
- If the purpose of the visit is non-urgent, patients are encouraged to reschedule the appointment until symptoms have resolved
- Upon entry to the facility, patients are to be instructed to don a facemask (e.g., procedure or surgical mask)
- Alert registration staff ahead of time to place the patient in an exam room with a closed door upon arrival

6.4.2. If identified after arrival:

- Provide facemasks to all persons (including persons accompanying patients) who are coughing and have symptoms of a respiratory infection.
- Place the coughing patient in an exam room with a closed door as soon as possible (if suspicious for airborne transmission, refer to Airborne Precautions in Section V.D.); if an exam room is not available, the patient should sit as far from other patients as possible in the waiting room.
- Accompanying persons who have symptoms of a respiratory infection should not enter patient-care areas and are encouraged to wait outside the facility.

6.5. Healthcare Personnel Responsibilities:

- ##### **6.5.1.** All healthcare personnel are aware of facility sick leave policies, including staff who are not directly employed by the facility but provide essential daily services.

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6.5.2. Healthcare personnel with a respiratory infection avoid direct patient contact; if this is not possible, then a facemask should be worn while providing patient care and frequent hand hygiene should be reinforced.

6.5.3. Healthcare personnel are up-to-Date with all recommended vaccinations, including annual influenza vaccine.

6.6. Staff Communication:

6.6.1. Designated personnel regularly review information on local respiratory virus activity provided by the ministry of health to determine if the facility will need to implement enhanced screening for respiratory symptoms.

6.7. During Periods of Increased Community Respiratory Virus Activity (e.g., Influenza Season):

6.7.1. In addition to the aforementioned infection prevention measures, the following enhanced screening measures are implemented:

- When scheduling and/or confirming appointments:
 - a) Pre-screen all patients and schedule those with respiratory symptoms to come when the facility might be less crowded, if possible
 - b) Instruct patients with respiratory symptoms to don a facemask upon entry to the facility
 - c) If the purpose of the visit is non-urgent, patients with symptoms of respiratory infection are encouraged to schedule an appointment after symptoms have resolved.
 - d) Encourage family members, caregivers, and visitors with symptoms of respiratory infection to not accompany patients during their visits to the facility.

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- e) If possible, prepare in advance for the registration staff a daily list of patients with respiratory symptoms who are scheduled for a visit
- **Upon entry to the facility and during visit:**
 - a) At the time of patient registration, facility staff should identify pre-screened patients (from the list) and screen all other patients and accompanying persons for symptoms of respiratory infection.
 - b) Patients identified with respiratory symptoms are placed in a private exam room as soon as possible; if an exam room is not available, patients are provided a facemask and placed in a separate area as far as possible from other patients while awaiting care
 - c) If patient volume is anticipated to be higher than usual with prolonged wait time at registration:
 - A separate triage station is established to identify pre-screened patients (from the list) and to screen all other patients and accompanying persons immediately upon their arrival and prior to registration
 - Patients identified with respiratory symptoms are registered in a separate area, if possible, and placed immediately in a private exam room; if an exam room is not available, patients are provided a facemask and placed in a separate area as far as possible from other patients while awaiting care
 - d) If possible, encourage family members, caregivers, and visitors with symptoms of respiratory infection to not enter the facility.

7. REFERENCES:

- 7.1. Cottone's *Practical Infection Control in Dentistry, 3rd Edition* (2010).