GOJO

HAND HYGIENE TIMES

Your Canadian resource for the latest news in effective infection control program development and best practices.

Issue 1 Volume 6

Cold and Flu Season: What you Need to Know to Stay Healthy

Megan J. DiGiorgio MSN, RN, CIC

Seasonal influenza (the flu) is front and center in everyone's minds right now. It is a serious illness that infects millions of Canadians every year. More than 12,200 people are hospitalized for flu-related complications, and about 3,500 people in Canada die each year from the flu. Those at greatest risk for becoming seriously ill with the flu include people 65 years of age and older, residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities, children and adults (including pregnant women) with chronic medical conditions, such as cancer, cardiac disorders, asthma, and morbid obesity, healthy pregnant women, and healthy children 6 months to 5 years of age.

To complicate matters, common cold viruses widely circulate during flu season, with the average adult getting two to four colds per year, mostly between September and May. Because these two types of viral respiratory illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to distinguish between them based on symptoms alone.

In general, the flu is more severe than the common cold. Colds typically do not result in serious complications, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections or hospitalizations. In some cases, diagnostic testing may need to be done in order determine whether a person has a cold or the flu. So how can you tell if it is the cold or flu? Below are some general differences.

Regardless of whether the culprit is the cold or the flu, there are some general infection prevention and control principles that every person should follow in order to stay healthy during cold and flu season.

1. **Get your flu vaccine and vaccinate your patients.** This is the most important measure you can take. Remember, you can't get the flu from the flu vaccine because it's either made with inactivated virus, no virus at all, or a weakened virus that cannot cause illness.
2. **Early detection is key.** If you suspect flu, it's important to test, isolate and in some cases, provide antiviral therapy.
3. **Perform hand hygiene often.** Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub frequently.
4. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.** Germs from your hands can enter your body through your eyes, nose and mouth.
5. **Cover your cough or sneeze.** Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or into a tissue and perform hand hygiene immediately after.
6. **Stay home if you are sick, and limit contact with others as much as possible.** A good rule of thumb is to stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. Healthcare worker presenteeism (coming to work sick) is harmful to patients and co-workers. Do no harm. Stay home.
7. **Clean and disinfect surfaces often.** This can help reduce the amount of germs present that can make you sick.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Usual; high (100°F to 102°F, occasionally higher, especially in young children); lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Common
General aches and pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual; can last up to 2 to 3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Usual; at the beginning of illness
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe

Source: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. Is it a cold or the flu? http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/Flu/Pages/cold0rFlu.aspx. Accessed December 1, 2014.

THAT'S a FACT!

Washing your hands correctly or using an alcohol-based hand rub is the most effective thing you can do to protect yourself and others against a number of infectious diseases, such as influenza (the "flu")

Health Canada. The Benefits of Hand Washing. It's Your Health. [link this to: http://hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/hands-mains-eng.php]

For more information about the flu and the most up-to-date information about this year's flu season, visit the GOJO Cold and Flu Page or the Public Health Agency of Canada's Flu Page (http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2014/flu-grippe-1022-eng.php.

Product Feature

WELL-BEING SOLUTIONS TO HELP REDUCE THE SPREAD OF GERMS

For over 65 years, GOJO has been a leader in the areas of infection prevention and skin science. The GOJO focus on hand hygiene and skin care science offers a whole systems approach to simplifying compliance and reducing germs that cause illness while moisturizing and nurturing the skin of even the most frequent users. We partner with healthcare facilities to improve patient outcomes through these critical components of an effective infection control program:

PREFERRED PRODUCTS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE AND GENTLE TO THE SKIN

Hand Sanitizer

The PURELL® brand builds awareness and enhances your healthcare facility image with products that people trust and want to use. As a company that's dedicated to the science of the skin, GOJO provides a variety of innovative, skin friendly hand sanitizer formulations. From gel formulas that help maintain skin health and skin moisture to a state-of-the-art foam formulation that is proven to help improve skin hydration in 14 days* and improve overall skin feel, we can help improve hand hygiene compliance with products people will want to use.

Handwash

Scientifically advanced formulations in PROVON® and GOJO® Brands provide the appeal and performance that is necessary to help reduce the spread of germs. These lines offer a wide selection of gel and foam formulations enriched with moisturizers with green certified options that support community and environmental wellness.

ACCESSIBILITY TO DRIVE COMPLIANCE

Our dispensers offer reliable delivery systems and hassle-free installation.

The PURELL Visitor Wellness Centre is a community outreach solution specifically designed to place in high traffic areas to provide visitors convenience access to hand hygiene and to demonstrate the hospital's commitment to community well-being and the fight against germs.

The centre consists of:

1) **awareness-building signage** to educate about the importance of covering a cough or sneeze and hand hygiene
2) **portable floor stand with brackets for masks and tissues** to make hand hygiene easy and convenient
3) **a touch free dispenser with PURELL Advanced Hand Rub**
   Clinical studies show that touch free dispensing systems help drive compliance by eliminating the need for manual dispensing thus removing the healthcare workers' concern about touching contaminated surfaces as they practice good hand hygiene.

AWARENESS-BUILDING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our programs and training tools raise awareness of the importance of proper hand hygiene and modify behavior. Download complimentary materials when you register at educational tools at www.GOJOCanada.ca/education

COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND MEASURING TOOLS

GOJO offers data gathering support and systems to help measure and build compliance. Learn more at **www.GOJOCanada.ca/SMARTLINK**

References from *Cold and Flu Season: What you Need to Know to Stay Healthy*

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. Public Health Reminder: Seasonal Flu. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2014/flu-grippe-1022-eng.php. Accessed January 12, 2015.
2. Government of Canada. Prevention: how can influenza be prevented? http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/flu-grippe/prevention-eng.php. Accessed January 12, 2015.

A Look Ahead

in next issue

© 2015. GOJO Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved.