

## Masks and Swine Influenza Fact Sheet

Version 1.0, April 29, 2009

### **Influenza Transmission**

Influenza is transmitted person to person through close contact. Transmission occurs through multiple routes, including large droplets and direct and indirect contact. Fine droplet inhalational transmission may also occur.

Droplet transmission involves contact of the mucous membranes of the nose or mouth or the conjunctivae of a susceptible person with large-particle droplets containing microorganisms generated by an infected person during coughing, sneezing, or talking. Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close contact (three to six feet) between source and recipient persons because these larger droplets do not remain suspended in the air and generally travel only short distances.

### **Prevention via the use of Masks**

**Healthcare Providers:** National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-certified respirators (N95 or higher) are recommended for healthcare providers that will have contact with patients with suspected or confirmed swine influenza.

- N95 masks require fit testing and are size and brand specific.
  - UCH employees are fit tested at hire via employee health.
  - Housestaff are fit tested by GME.
  - Faculty should also have been fit-tested via employee health.
  - **IF you have NOT been fit-tested for an N-95 mask, please contact employee health at 720-848-6849 to have this scheduled.**
- Prior to entering the room of a patient with suspected swine influenza, perform hand hygiene and then put on the N-95 mask. Avoid touching the outside of the device to prevent contamination of your hands.
- Once worn in the presence of a patient with patient with suspected or confirmed swine influenza, the disposable N95 respirator mask should be removed after leaving the room and appropriately discarded. Hand hygiene should then be performed.
- Reuse of the masks is NOT recommended.

**Individuals with suspected or confirmed swine influenza:** Surgical masks should be placed on individuals who present with respiratory symptoms as quickly as possible and they should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene.

- There is no utility in placing an N-95 mask on a patient that is being evaluated for swine influenza. A surgical mask is sufficient to contain infectious droplets.

Supply conservation is important. Please use masks in as part of customary safe practices. Ordering of masks for individual areas should be done on on-going basis as needed utilizing standard processes.