

Policy # HC-HR-119-POL	Title: Influenza Vaccination and Masking Policy	
Effective Date: 10/2/2012	Category: Infection Control	
Origination Date: 10/2012	Next Review Date: 10/2/1015	Pages 1 of 4

PURPOSE:

Each year 5% to 20% of U.S. residents acquire an influenza virus infection, and many will seek medical care in ambulatory healthcare settings. In addition, over 200,000 persons, on average, are hospitalized in the US each year for [influenza-related complications](#).

Influenza viruses are spread from person to person primarily through [large-particle respiratory droplet transmission](#) (e.g., when an infected person coughs or sneezes near a susceptible person). Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close contact between source and recipient persons, because droplets generally travel only short distances (approximately 6 feet or less) through the air. Indirect contact transmission via hand transfer of influenza virus from virus-contaminated surfaces or objects to mucosal surfaces of the face (e.g., nose, mouth) may also occur. Airborne transmission may also occur when small particle aerosols are generated, such as during procedures involving a patient's airway.

Healthcare personnel (HCP) should be aware that influenza may not always result in typical symptoms, and that influenza may be transmitted before they know they are infected. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection. Although mask use may help prevent influenza transmission, wearing a mask while at work will not help prevent HCP from acquiring influenza infection in other venues, such as at home or in the community. Achieving high influenza vaccination rates of HCP and patients is a critical step in preventing healthcare transmission of influenza from HCP to patients and from patients to HCP.

Oregon State law requires that health care facilities and certain employers offer influenza vaccinations to employees (ORS 433.416). All hospitals, including OHSU, must annually report to the state the total number of HCP at the facility, the number of HCP who received influenza vaccine, and information regarding why those who declined vaccination chose to do so.

All OHSU Healthcare Workforce Members should receive annual influenza vaccination unless they have a medical contraindication.

PERSONS AFFECTED:

1. All OHSU Healthcare Workforce Members
2. OHSU Healthcare Personnel

POLICY:

All OHSU employees must receive the seasonal influenza vaccination through Occupational Health (formerly called 'Employee Health') or complete and submit an *Attestation/Declination Form*. All HCP who do not receive the

seasonal influenza vaccination, regardless of the reason for not getting the influenza vaccination, must wear a surgical mask within six feet of a patient in patient care areas during the influenza season to help protect patients and prevent influenza transmission. When an OHSU employee has received the seasonal influenza vaccine, he/she must either wear a seasonal influenza vaccination sticker on the top left corner of the front of his/her OHSU identification badge for the duration of the influenza season or wear a procedural mask within six feet of any patient in patient care areas when the 'masks on' message has been communicated to staff for the duration of influenza season.

DEFINITIONS:

1. OHSU Healthcare Workforce Member (HWM) as used herein refers to all OHSU employees, contracted personnel and volunteers. It also includes students providing patient care as part of their clinical rotation.
2. OHSU Healthcare Personnel (HCP) refers to all persons, paid and unpaid, working in healthcare settings who have the potential for exposure to patients and/or to infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.
 - a. HCP include, but are not limited to, physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, students and trainees, contractual personnel, home healthcare personnel, and persons not directly involved in patient care (e.g., clerical, dietary, house-keeping, laundry, security, maintenance, billing, chaplains, and volunteers) but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from HCP and patients.
3. Attestation/Declination Form is a form that employees must complete if they received the influenza vaccination from someplace other than an OHSU Occupational Health (OH)-sponsored vaccination clinic/administration site or if they are declining vaccination. The Attestation/Declination form is available electronically and per request from OH or managers. The four declination reasons listed are: medical contraindication, history of Guillain-Barre syndrome, religious/philosophical beliefs, and non-medical/personal beliefs. (The number of declinations and reasons are de-identified when used for federal and state-mandated reporting.)
4. Influenza Season as used herein begins when there are two or more lab-confirmed influenza cases within a two-week period identified in the OHSU lab or at Oregon Public Health Laboratory as reviewed and determined by OHSU Infection Control. The Influenza Season is considered to continue through the last week of April. The Influenza Season could be continued or reinstated beyond the end of April if flu activity remains at or becomes greater than two lab-confirmed influenza cases in a two-week period as determined by OHSU Infection Control.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. It is the responsibility for all OHSU staff to get a seasonal flu vaccination or to complete and submit an *Attestation/Declination Form* by March 31st of every year.
2. It is the responsibility of the employee who receives his/her seasonal flu vaccination from somewhere other than an OHSU OH-sponsored vaccination clinic or administration site (e.g., at their Primary Care Provider office or an externally-sponsored administration site) to complete the attestation portion of the *Attestation/Declination Form* and submit it to OH within 10 days. The form is available electronically and per request from OH or managers.
3. It is the responsibility for all OHSU employees who get a flu vaccination to wear a seasonal influenza vaccination sticker on the top left corner of the front of their OHSU identification badges for the duration of the influenza season or wear a procedural mask within six feet of any patient in patient care areas when the 'masks on' message has been communicated to staff for the duration of influenza season.
4. It is the responsibility of the HCP who has not received an influenza vaccination to wear a surgical mask within six feet of any patient in patient care areas throughout influenza season.
5. It is the responsibility of directors, managers, supervisors, charge nurses, shift leaders, physician leaders, and shift charges to hold HCP responsible for wearing surgical masks in designated patient care areas.

PROCEDURES:

1. Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

- a. All OHSU employees must receive the seasonal influenza vaccination through an OH-sponsored vaccination clinic/administration site or complete and submit an *Attestation/Declination Form* to OH.
 - i. OHSU provides influenza vaccinations to all HCP free of charge through OH. OH coordinates designated vaccination clinics during flu season. In addition, they provide vaccinations in the OH clinic and provide vaccines and supplies to departments/units for unit-based administration.
 - ii. If an employee receives his/her vaccination at an external location, they must formally **attest** to receiving it elsewhere by completing and submitting the *Attestation/Declination Form* within ten days.
 - iii. If an employee is unwilling to receive the flu vaccine, he/she must **decline** the vaccine on the *Attestation/Declination Form*. The four declination reasons listed are: medical contraindication, history of Guillain-Barre syndrome, religious/philosophical beliefs, and non-medical/personal beliefs.
- b. All OHSU employees who get a seasonal influenza vaccination must either wear a seasonal influenza vaccination sticker on the top left corner of the front of their OHSU identification badges for the duration of the influenza season or wear a procedural mask within six feet of any patient in patient care areas when the 'masks on' message has been sent to staff for the duration of influenza season. Stickers will be made available by OH when employees receive the vaccination through OH or when the employee attests to receiving his/her influenza vaccination elsewhere on the *Attestation/Declination Form*.

2. Surgical Masking

- a. An HCP who has not received a seasonal influenza vaccination sticker nor submitted an attestation form by the 'Masks On' date must wear a surgical mask within six feet of any patient in patient care areas and continue to wear a mask throughout the influenza season or until he/she has received a vaccination and selects to place the vaccination sticker on the upper left corner on the front of their OHSU identification badge throughout influenza season.
- b. Any HCP who received seasonal influenza vaccination and selects not to continuously place their seasonal influenza vaccination sticker on the front upper-left corner their OHSU identification badge must wear a surgical mask within six feet of a patient when in a patient care area throughout influenza season.
- c. Acceptable surgical or procedural masks include: yellow masks with loops over the ears, blue cone masks or surgical tie masks.
- d. All unvaccinated HCP must wear a surgical mask within six feet of a patient when they are within a patient care area throughout influenza season.
- e. HCP should not use N-95 masks to meet this masking requirement unless required to comply with isolation or procedure guidelines. (*Isolation Policy, Airborne and Droplet Precautions, aerosol generating procedures*)
- f. HCP must observe isolation procedures regarding masking and removal of personal protective equipment between patient encounters.
- g. The same mask can be worn between patients except when required to remove or change the mask to observe isolation procedures.
- h. Change the mask when it becomes wet or soiled.
- i. Adjust the mask to fit snugly over the nose and cover the nose and mouth during use then discard the mask when not in use. Masks are not to dangle, be propped on the head or placed in pockets, etc. between uses.

3. Dates of Mandatory Masking

- a. Masking requirement will begin for unvaccinated HCP when there are \geq two lab-confirmed influenza cases identified in the OHSU lab or at Oregon Public Health Laboratory within a two-week period as reviewed and determined by OHSU Infection Control. A 'Masks On' message will be sent out to staff.
- b. The masking requirement will discontinue at the end of the last week of April. The masking requirement could be continued or reinstated if flu activity remains at or becomes \geq two lab-confirmed influenza cases in a two week period as determined by Infection Control. A 'Masks Off' message will be sent out

to staff.

4. Monitoring and Enforcement

- a. OHSU HCPs are required to assist others with applying this policy to their practice.
- b. Employees are not permitted to wear the seasonal influenza vaccination sticker if they did not receive the flu vaccine and those that are caught doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.
- c. Managers will perform periodic 'spot checks' for staff in patient care areas. HCPs that do not adhere to this policy will be referred to a supervisor/chief/chair for disciplinary action and intervention.
- d. HCP are personally and professionally responsible for applying this policy in keeping with the *Code of Conduct* and patient safety standards.

RELEVANT REFERENCES:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Prevention Strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings*. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm#personnel>

RELATED DOCUMENTS/EXTERNAL LINKS:

- OHSU Code of Conduct
- OHSU Healthcare Isolation Policy
- OHSU Airborne Precautions and Droplet Precautions

TITLE, POLICY OWNER:

- Co-Chair, Safety Executive Council, Daniel A. Handel, MD
- Manager, Patient Safety Program, Laurie G. McKeown, MD

APPROVING COMMITTEE(S):

Safety Executive Council

FINAL APPROVAL:

OHSU Healthcare Administrative Team

Supersedes: