PURPOSE:
To prevent the transmission of **all** respiratory infections in healthcare settings, including influenza, the following infection control measures should be implemented at the first point of contact with a potentially infected person.

POLICY:
All practices should ensure and demonstrate the incorporation and adherence of Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette infection control practices as a component of Standard Precautions.

PROCEDURE:

Visual Alerts - Post visual alerts (in appropriate languages) at the entrance to outpatient facilities (e.g., physician offices and outpatient clinics) instructing patients and persons who accompany them (e.g., family, friends) to inform healthcare personnel of symptoms of a respiratory infection when they first register for care and to practice Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette.

- Notice to Patients to Report Flu Symptoms
  Emphasizes covering coughs and sneezes and the cleaning of hands

- Cover Your Cough
  Tips to prevent the spread of germs from coughing

- Information about Personal Protective Equipment
  Demonstrates the sequences for donning and removing personal protective equipment

Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette - The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

- Cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing;

- Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions and dispose of them in the nearest waste receptacle after use;

Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Faculty Practice Group Healthcare facilities should ensure the availability of materials for adhering to Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in waiting areas for patients and visitors.

- Provide tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal.

- Provide conveniently located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub; where sinks are available, ensure that supplies for hand washing (i.e., soap, disposable towels) are consistently available.

Masking and Separation of Persons with Respiratory Symptoms - During periods of increased respiratory infection activity in the community (e.g., when there is increased absenteeism in schools and work settings and increased medical office visits by persons complaining of respiratory illness), offer masks to persons who are coughing. Either procedure masks (i.e., with ear loops) or surgical masks (i.e., with ties) may be used to contain respiratory secretions (respirators such as N-95 or above are not necessary for this purpose). When space and chair availability permit, encourage

coughing persons to sit at least three feet away from others in common waiting areas. Some facilities may find it logistically easier to institute this recommendation year-round.

Droplet Precautions - Advise healthcare personnel to observe Droplet Precautions (i.e., wearing a surgical or procedure mask for close contact), in addition to Standard Precautions, when examining a patient with symptoms of a respiratory infection, particularly if fever is present. These precautions should be maintained until it is determined that the cause of symptoms is not an infectious agent that requires Droplet Precautions http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ppe.html.

NOTE: These recommendations are based on the *Draft Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings*. Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC), CDC.

REFERENCES: *Hospital based practices see Health System Policy HS IC - 008*

RESOURCES: Respiratory Etiquette Observational Tool
HTT Cover Your Cough Flyer

REVISION HISTORY
Effective Date:
Review Date:
Revised Date: