



# PRECAUTIONS AGAINST INFLUENZA

## 1. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO KNOW ABOUT INFLUENZA?

Headlines such as ‘Flu epidemic expected’ are a common sight in the tabloids. Behind these headlines there is a real illness caused by Influenza viruses which can have potentially disastrous consequences for our customers and staff.

## 2. WHAT IS INFLUENZA?

Influenza viruses are small, round structured, enveloped viruses, of the Orthomyxoviruses and are a family of RNA viruses that includes six genera. The three genera Influenza virus A, Influenza virus B and Influenza virus C contain viruses that cause influenza in vertebrates, including birds, humans, and other mammals .

## 3. WHERE IS IT FOUND?

The Influenza virus is easily spread in places where people are in close contact more often, this promotes transmission from person to person. The most common settings or circumstances for spreading are essentially, everywhere people gather, for instance:

- Hospitality and lodging settings
- Schools (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Public transport (airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Hospitals, nursing homes (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Military troops (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Athletic teams (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Foodservice/restaurant environment (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)
- Cruise ships (person-to-person transmission, airborne transmission, transmission via surfaces)

## 4. IS INFLUENZA A SERIOUS INFECTION?

Influenza, commonly known as "the flu", is an infectious disease. Flu can occasionally lead to pneumonia, either direct viral pneumonia or secondary bacterial pneumonia, even for persons who are usually very healthy.

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## 5. HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Typically, influenza is transmitted through the air by coughs or sneezes, creating aerosols containing the virus. Influenza can also be transmitted by direct contact with nasal secretions, or through contact with contaminated surfaces. Airborne aerosols have been thought to cause most infections.

## 6. WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The most common symptoms are chills, fever, runny nose, sore throat, muscle pains, headache (often severe), coughing, weakness/fatigue and general discomfort. Influenza may produce nausea and vomiting, particularly in children. Symptoms of influenza can start quite suddenly one to two days after infection. Usually the first symptoms are chills or a chilly sensation, but fever is also common early in the infection, with body temperatures ranging from 38 to 39°C. Many people are so ill that they are confined to bed for several days, with aches and pains throughout their bodies, which are worse in their backs and legs.

## 7. HOW SOON DO THE SYMPTOMS SHOW AND HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

Most people will recover completely in about one to two weeks.

## 8. HOW CONTAGIOUS IS INFLUENZA?

The influenza virus can be highly contagious. Flu epidemics spread rapidly and are very difficult to control. However, the generation time for influenza is extremely short: the time from a person becoming infected to when he infects the next person is only two days. Influenza virus shedding begins the day before symptoms appear and virus is then released for five to seven days. Children are much more infectious than adults and shed virus from just before they develop symptoms until two weeks after infection. In the airborne route, just one droplet might be enough to cause an infection.

## 9. HOW IS IT TREATED?

People who are unwell should seek medical attention and take advice from trained health care practitioners.



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## 10. HOW IS IT PREVENTED?

Reasonably effective ways to reduce the transmission of influenza include good personal health and hygiene habits such as: not touching your eyes, nose or mouth; frequent hand washing (with soap and water, or with alcohol-based hand rubs); covering coughs and sneezes; avoiding close contact with sick people; staying home yourself if you are sick and thoroughly washing tableware. In other words: *Good hygienic practice!*

The influenza vaccine is recommended by the World Health Organisation and European Center for Disease Control and Prevention for high-risk groups, such as children, the elderly, health care workers, and people who have chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or are immune-compromised among others.

## 11. THAT MAKES SENSE BUT WHERE DOES THE CONTAMINATION COME FROM?

New influenza viruses are constantly evolving by mutation or by re-assortment. Mutations can cause small changes until one virus evolves that can infect people who are immune to the pre-existing strains. This new variant then replaces the older strains as it rapidly sweeps through the human population, often causing an epidemic.

## 12. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MY CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES?

As with all potential infectious diseases, customers and employees should be ever vigilant and focus on good hygienic practices.



## 13. AREN'T ALL DISINFECTANTS THE SAME, DON'T THEY ALL JUST KILL GERMS?

Yes, all disinfectants kill germs but no they are not all the same! That's why it is important to read the product label and to know whether the product is going to be effective against influenza. And it is critically important to know about the contact times for the products which can vary from as little as a minute and sometimes can be as much as 10 minutes. So, it is critical to read the product label and find that information.

## 14. DO YOU HAVE TO USE ANTI-BACTERIAL SOAP WHEN WASHING YOUR HANDS OR WILL REGULAR SOAP BE SUFFICIENT?

No, regular soap and water is perfect, remember influenza is a virus not a bacteria. An anti-bacterial soap is for killing bacteria. However, to be effective make sure to follow the correct hand washing procedure, wet hands with clean running water, apply soap, lather soap (30 seconds), rinse well under clean water, and dry.



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## 15. IF I WANT MORE INFORMATION REGARDING INFLUENZA BEYOND ECOLAB WHERE SHOULD I GO?

When looking for the best available public health information the three sites we would recommend looking at are;

- Public health England
- ECDC
- WHO

They all have a wealth of information regarding influenza as well as other information Public Health infections such as Norovirus.

## 16. I AM A RECEPTION MANAGER IN A HOTEL HOW DO I MAKE ALCOHOL HAND GEL AVAILABLE TO NOT ONLY MY GUESTS BUT MY COLLEAGUES AS WELL?

Alcohol hand sanitizers come in various sizes and with various dispensers. You can have small 60ml bottles which you can carry around with you, you can have portable bottles and dispenser stations to put around your establishments entrance or you also have wall fixed dispensing options available to you. We would also recommend speaking to your territory manager who can recommend the best solution for you.



## 17. DO I HAVE TO CLEAN ALL SURFACES?

For the flu it is important to concentrate on the hand contact touch points or surfaces. They look so innocent, but our hands are one of the most common vehicles for carrying and transferring germs around. Simple things like door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, stair hand rails, anything that is frequently touched by hands we would recommended cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis to minimise the spread of germs.

