



## HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

**POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 2.25**

**DEPARTMENT:** *Infection Control*

**SUBJECT:** *Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette*

**APPROVAL DATE:** November 2022

**REVISION DATE:**

**REVIEW DATE:**

**Page 1 of 3**

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### **Overview:**

Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette are interventions to reduce the risk of transmission of micro-organisms from resident to resident, resident to health worker and health care worker to residents. Respiratory illnesses like influenza are caused by a virus that infects the nose, throat and lungs. Respiratory illness spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes and droplets are deposited on another person or the environment.

### **Policy**

1. Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette shall be implemented at any Point of Care Risk Assessment, or recognition of any resident, staff, or visitor presenting with respiratory symptoms; coughing, sneezing, congestion, increased secretions, or runny nose.
2. Residents and accompanying family members and friends with undiagnosed transmissible respiratory infections will practice Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.
3. Staff will instruct residents and visitors on the respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette procedure.

### **Purpose**

1. To use Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette as a new component of Standard Precautions.
2. To increase Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette practices to reduce the risk of transmission of micro-organisms from undiagnosed transmissible respiratory infections, asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease, and allergic rhinitis.

### **Procedure**

1. Use droplet precautions (see policy: Infection Control: Routine Precautions – Additional



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**Page 2 of 3**

---

Precautions: 2.2b) for coughing and sneezing patients, until it is determined that the cause of symptoms is not an infectious agent.

2. Place resident in a single room, if available.

3. Staff to wear a mask and eye protection when assessing residents with respiratory symptoms and providing direct patient care. DOFF mask appropriately after interaction with any resident (see policy: Infection Control: Personal Protective Equipment for the Healthcare Provider: 2.22).

4. Provide a mask to residents with symptoms of respiratory symptoms, if not medically contraindicated, when outside assigned room or designated examination area. Provide mask application, removal and disposal information. Provide tissues and instructions on their use and disposal when coughing, sneezing, or controlling respiratory secretions.

5. Respiratory Hygiene Cough Etiquette Instructions:

- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing, by using either a tissue or the bend of your arm, **not** your hand, if you're not wearing a mask
- Dispose of the used tissue in the nearest waste receptacle.
- Perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub (policy Infection Control: Hand Hygiene: 2.3).
- Ensure any resident with signs and symptoms of Acute Respiratory Infection, or any unknown cause of such symptoms are dismissed from any common area of the home and brought to their room for assessment.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Residents will be advised to practice respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing:

- turn the head away from others



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**Page 3 of 3**

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- cover the nose and mouth with tissue; if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands
- discard tissues immediately after use into waste
- perform hand hygiene immediately after disposal of tissues
- Inform staff of any signs or symptoms of Acute Respiratory Infection
- Physical distancing encouraged.

### **Entrance of Home:**

Visual alert: Signs Posted on how to follow Respiratory Etiquette throughout the home.

Medical Masks available and instructions posted on how to put on and take off a mask properly.

Health care workers (HCWs), other staff, essential visitors or general visitors' clean hands with ABHR and then don a medical mask to enter the home.

### **Resources:**

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for prevention, surveillance and infection control management of novel respiratory infections in all health care settings. 1st revision. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>

COVID 19: Prevention and Risks – last modified October 28 2022.

COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Checklist for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes 2nd Edition: July 2022

CDC; Influenza; <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>; retrieved November 2022.