

Infection prevention and control of epidemic- and pandemic-prone acute respiratory diseases in health care

WHO Interim Guidelines

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Guidance updates

- The present guidelines supersede the document “*Hospital Infection Control Guidance for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)*”, revised 24 April 2003, previously available at <http://www.who.int/csr/sars/infectioncontrol/en/>
- These guidelines relate to, and can be used in conjunction with, the document “*Avian Influenza, Including Influenza A (H5N1): WHO Interim Infection Control Guidelines for Health-care Facilities*” published by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific on 10 March 2004, and updated in May 2007, available at http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/guidelines/infectioncontrol1/en/index.html
- Please make sure the version being used is the most recent version available at: <http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/csrrpublications/en/index7.html>.
- After the conclusion of the pilot tests, to be conducted in 200/2008, a revised version of these guidelines will be published.
- In the event of new epidemics or pandemics, additional recommendations will be forthcoming.

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Foreword

The purpose of this document is to provide infection control guidance to help prevent the transmission of acute infectious respiratory diseases during health care, with emphasis on acute respiratory diseases that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern as defined in the International Health Regulations (2005; Annex 1). Managers of health-care facilities may also consider using this guidance to assist them in preparation for epidemics and pandemics.

This document is intended to be used by government planners, health-care facility administrators, infection control professionals, occupational health specialists, other professionals involved in patient care and direct care providers.

The infection control advice provided in the guidelines is based on available information on the main routes of transmission of pathogens, and is intended to provide guidance for continuous and sustainable improvement in safety of health care. These guidelines are designed to offer Member States a conceptual framework for individual adaptation according to local regulations, settings, needs and resources. Health-care facilities are encouraged to review the recommendations and to adapt them accordingly.

The guidelines were developed after performing a systematic review of the scientific literature (in English) identified through PubMed (US National Library of Medicine) and the Cochrane Library, and secondary papers (in English, and also in Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish) identified from existing relevant guidelines. International and national infection control guidelines and infection control textbooks were also consulted. The document has undergone internal and external peer reviews. The Guideline Steering Group¹ evaluated the comments suggested by the reviewers providing guidance when opinions differed, and oversaw the incorporation of amendments and finalization of the document.

Pilot tests of the guidelines will be conducted in 2007 and 2008 in each of the six WHO Regions to help provide local data on clarity of the document and generate information on resources required to carry out the recommendations, feasibility, and validity of the interventions concerned. The pilot tests may also help provide information for implementation and dissemination strategies. The guidelines will be reviewed and updated after the conclusion of the pilot tests.

As in many other areas, the knowledge on modes of transmission of respiratory diseases is evolving rapidly. In addition, case surveillance and case and contact investigation are critical in defining and identifying changes in the epidemiology of human infections and will continue to inform infection control recommendations. Modifications to these guidelines will be made, as necessary, as additional information becomes available.

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I. List of acronyms and definition of terms used in the document

Acronyms

ACH	air changes per hour
AORN	Professional Organization of Perioperative Registered Nurses (USA)
ARD	acute respiratory disease
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials (former name)
BFE	bacterial filtration efficiency
BiPAP	bilevel positive airway pressure
BSL	biosafety level
CDC(US)	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, United States of America
CE	Conformité Européenne (European Conformity)
Co-V	coronavirus
CPAP	continuous positive airway pressure
EU	European Union
FDA	Food and Drug Administration (United States of America)
FFP	filtering face piece
HCF	health-care facility
HCW	health-care worker
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILI	influenza-like illness
NIOSH(US)	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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