



Training Solutions, Delivered!

# **PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS**

*(Concise)*

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet  
& Quiz**

**Item Number: 3943**

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***This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.***

## **PREPARING FOR THE MEETING**

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

## **3943 PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS (*Concise*)**

### **FACT SHEET**

**LENGTH: 10 MINUTES**

#### **PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

Over the past several years, it seems you cannot turn on a newscast or open a newspaper without seeing headlines about an outbreak of some type of virus or infection. Swine flu, avian flu, the respiratory ailment known as SARS and the antibiotic-resistant staph infection known as MRSA are just a few of the highly contagious illnesses and infections that have caused hundreds of people to get sick and die around the globe in the past decade. The purpose of this program is to help employees understand how to prevent becoming infected by and transmitting these contagious illnesses. It also explains the symptoms and warning signs of flu, SARS and MRSA and discusses how to respond to a suspected infection.

Other topics include the use of facemasks to prevent infection, precautions to take in areas suspected of contamination, how various contagious illnesses are diagnosed and treated and how to prepare for and respond to a pandemic.

#### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, the viewer will be able to identify the following:

- The symptoms of swine flu, avian flu, SARS and MRSA and how these infections are transmitted;
- The precautions necessary for preventing the spread and contraction of contagious illnesses;
- The measures to take to prevent infection when working in areas suspected of contamination;
- How to respond to a suspected infection of a contagious illness;
- How to prepare for and respond to a flu or SARS pandemic.

#### **INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:**

##### **BACKGROUND**

- Over the past several years, it seems you cannot turn on a newscast or open a newspaper without seeing headlines about an outbreak of some type of virus or infection.
- What has health officials worldwide so concerned about these types of outbreaks is the real possibility that one will reach pandemic status.
- The purpose of this program is to help you understand how to prevent becoming infected and transmitting these contagious illnesses as well as explaining the symptoms and warning signs of flu, SARS and MRSA, while learning how to respond to a suspected infection.
- First, we'll discuss some of the common illnesses, their symptoms and how they are spread, starting with the swine flu.

##### **SWINE FLU & ITS SYMPTOMS**

- Until recently, swine flu had mainly been confined to pigs and persons who had contact with pigs but is now being transmitted from human to human.
- The onset of symptoms of swine flu is similar to those of the common seasonal flu, including weakness, fever, body ache, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
- In some cases, the illness can become severe, escalating to pneumonia and respiratory failure. Some deaths have also been reported.

##### **AVIAN FLU & ITS SYMPTOMS**

- Avian influenza, commonly called "bird flu", is an infection caused by flu viruses that occur naturally in birds.
- Symptoms of avian flu are much like those of seasonal flu and swine flu: weakness, fever, body ache, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Eye infection, acute respiratory distress, pneumonia and other severe, life-threatening complications have been reported in some avian flu patients.

## **HOW SWINE & AVIAN FLU ARE TRANSMITTED**

- Avian and swine flu are transmitted much like the common seasonal flu is spread during flu season. This occurs mainly from person to person through the coughing and sneezing of infected people.
- Once the infected person sneezes or coughs, the droplets of the virus can be inhaled or swallowed, or they can enter the membranes of the eyes or the nose.
- Also, people are frequently infected by touching something with flu viruses on its surface, then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

## **SARS, ITS SYMPTOMS & TRANSMISSION**

- Another health concern is Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.
- SARS is transmitted much in the same way as swine and avian flu. When a person sneezes or coughs, the virus can be inhaled, swallowed or enter the eye, nose or mouth membranes of anyone close by.
- Like the flu, a person can also be infected by SARS by touching his or her mouth, nose or eyes after contacting a contaminated object.
- SARS generally starts with a high fever. Other symptoms may include headache, body ache and diarrhea. After a few days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough, while most of them also develop pneumonia.

## **MRSA, ITS SYMPTOMS & TRANSMISSION**

- Another health issue affecting workplaces, schools and hospitals is Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.
- The symptoms of MRSA are usually mild, such as redness and swollen lesions on the skin, but can quickly cause more serious infections by infecting surgical wounds, the bloodstream, the lungs or other organs. Some of these infections can be life-threatening and even result in death.
- MRSA is transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or by contact with shared items or surfaces that have been infected by the bacteria. This includes tools, protective equipment or anything else someone with the infection has touched.
- It is also commonly spread through the handling of bandages and other items used to treat cuts and lacerations.

## **PREVENTING CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS INFECTION**

- Health officials agree that cleanliness is the best defense for protecting yourself from being infected by flu, SARS, MRSA or similar illnesses.
- Washing your hands thoroughly and often will help protect you from germs. Wash your hands frequently and always after a known potential exposure.
- When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.
- Another way to avoid picking up the virus is to avoid touching commonly used objects. These can be loaded with germs that may carry an infection or virus.
- Of course, it's impossible not to touch door handles, light switches and other common objects. This is why it's so important to wash your hands often and avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose with your hands.

## **PRECAUTIONS FOR AREAS SUSPECTED OF CONTAMINATION**

- It's a good idea to frequently sanitize commonly used items if you share your desk, tools or protective equipment with co-workers.
- Since germs cling to your bare hands, covering your mouth and nose with your hands when you cough or sneeze could result in spreading germs and passing along infections to others. Instead, when you feel a cough or sneeze coming, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or paper towel, then throw it away immediately.

## **PRECAUTIONS FOR MRSA INFECTIONS**

- Keep in mind that the precautions we've mentioned can help you prevent contracting many types of contagious illnesses, including the common cold and the seasonal flu. However, other specific precautions should be taken to avoid contracting a MRSA infection.
- First of all, keep all insect bites, cuts and abrasions covered with a clean bandage and change the bandage frequently.
- Avoid touching other people's wounds or bandages.

- Once some type of illness or infection has occurred, areas known to have been occupied by the infected person or objects that have become contaminated require even more stringent precautions until they have been decontaminated and deemed free of exposure risk.

### **RESPONDING TO A SUSPECTED INFECTION**

- Despite all the efforts you may make to avoid contracting a contagious illness, there is always the possibility of getting sick. How and when you respond may be the difference between a few days of bed rest and severe infection that has long lasting consequences.
- First and foremost, do not go to work while sick. Do not send your kids to school or daycare while sick.
- In general, various flu viruses are contagious for up to 7 days from the onset of symptoms.
- Isolate yourself at home or visit your physician and follow his or her orders before returning to your job.
- If you live in an area where outbreaks of swine flu or avian flu have been identified, you should consider contacting your physician if you suffer any flu-like symptoms.

### **DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT OF SARS**

- While people who are infected with SARS generally suffer symptoms similar to those of the flu accompanied with breathing difficulty, the key symptom is a fever higher than 100.4 degrees F. If you are experiencing these symptoms, you should contact your physician and schedule a visit as soon as possible.
- To determine if you have SARS, your physician will usually conduct several tests to see if your illness is caused by something else, then you will undergo two or more tests for antibodies done on separate days to confirm infection.
- There is no known medication to cure SARS. Fortunately, nine out of 10 people infected with SARS fully recover.

### **MRSA DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT**

- A MRSA infection usually appears as a bump on the skin or an area that has one or more of these symptoms: red, swollen, painful, warm to the touch or full of pus or other drainage.
- If you suspect you have a MRSA infection, contact your healthcare professional. You should see your physician as soon as possible if the symptoms of this infection are accompanied by a fever.

### **PREPARING FOR & RESPONDING TO A PANDEMIC**

- Should a pandemic appear imminent, talk with your local public health officials and healthcare providers.
- Stay informed about the pandemic through web sites such as the one for the Center for Disease Control, through local and national pandemic hotlines and through radio and television broadcasts.

**PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS (*Concise*)**

**ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ**

1. a

2. c

3. c

4. b

5. b

**PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS (Concise)**  
**REVIEW QUIZ**

*The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Health officials agree that avoiding crowds of people is the best defense for protecting yourself from being infected by a contagious illness.

- a. True
- b. False

3. In general, flu viruses are contagious up to \_\_\_\_\_ days from the onset of symptoms.

- a. 3
- b. 5
- c. 7

3. \_\_\_\_\_ out of 10 people infected with SARS fully recover from the illness.

- a. 5
- b. 7
- c. 9

4. Which of the following infections is transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or skin contact with an infected object?

- a. Swine flu
- b. MRSA
- c. SARS

5. You should only go to work while you are sick if your work area is isolated from all other co-workers.

- a. True
- b. False