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Updated Recommendations for Isolation Period for Persons with Influenza-Like Illness

On August 5, 2009, CDC changed its recommendation related to the amount of time people with influenza-like illness should stay away from others (the exclusion period).

Based on the new CDC guidance, the Department of Public Health and Social Services recommends that people with influenza-like illness should stay home for 3-5 days or 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine, whichever is longer (fever is defined as having a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit or 37.8° Celsius or greater). This is a change from the previous recommendation that ill persons stay home for 7 days after illness onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of symptoms, whichever was longer.

Epidemiologic data indicates that most people with the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus had a fever that lasted 2 to 4 days; this would require an exclusion period of **3 to 5 days** in most cases. Those with more severe illness are likely to have a fever for longer periods of time.

The new recommendation applies to schools, businesses, camps and mass gatherings.

NOTE: This guidance does not apply to health care settings where the exclusion period continues to be for 7 days from symptom onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of symptoms, whichever is longer.

In addition to health care settings, exclusion or isolation of **7 days from symptom onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of symptoms, whichever is longer**, is recommended for the following categories of people:

- Children younger than 5 years old
- Children and adolescents (younger than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection
- Pregnant women
- Persons aged 65 years or older
- Adults and children who have asthma, other chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders such as diabetes; adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV)
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

When people who have had influenza-like illness return to work, school, or other community settings they should **continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene and**

avoid close contact with people they know to be at increased risk of influenza-related complications.

The new recommendation attempts to balance the risks of acquiring illness from influenza and the potential benefits of decreasing transmission through the exclusion of ill persons with the goal of minimizing social disruption. This guidance will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

To read the complete revised guidance
see: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm>

For more information, please visit the following website at www.flu.gov; the Department of Public Health and Social Services website at www.dphss.guam.gov; or Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense website at www.guamhs.org. You may also call the Information Line at 735-H1N1 (4161).