



BC Centre for Disease Control  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



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## Guidelines for Home Isolations September 2009

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### Home Isolations

#### What is home isolation?

A person may be placed on home isolation if they have an infectious illness such as influenza. Isolation means staying at home, not going outside, not going to work, school or other public places and not meeting with other people. While at home, the person who is sick should stay isolated or away from other household members as much as possible.

#### Why am I on home isolation?

You are on home isolation to prevent spreading influenza to other people. It also gives you time to recover from influenza. The influenza virus is contagious for 24 hours before and for several days after the symptoms start; for most people they are no longer contagious when they are feeling better and their symptoms, especially fever, have gone away. You may be contagious for longer if your symptoms are not getting better and you still have fever.

#### How long do I have to stay on home isolation?

You should be on home isolation until your symptoms are better and you are able to get back to all your normal activities. If you had a fever with your influenza illness it should be gone without using fever medications.

#### What can I do to prevent the spread of influenza while under home isolation?

- The sick person should stay in one room with the door closed to separate themselves from healthy family members.

- Wash hard surfaces and items handled by the isolated person thoroughly with soap and hot water and a disinfectant such as a 10% bleach solution (made up of one part bleach to nine parts water).
- Discourage any visits from people who do not live in the house.
- All household members, including the sick person, should wash their hands frequently using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Keep personal items, such as towels, separate from the rest of the family.
- Do not share eating utensils or drinks.
- Dishes and laundry should be washed with warm water and soap as usual.

### **Is my family safe?**

Household members should stay away from the isolated person as much as possible and try to keep a 2 metre (6 feet) distance when contact with other members of the household is unavoidable. The sick person should recover in their own room as much as possible. If you need to go in the room with the sick person ask them to put a mask on or cover their mouth with a tissue or handkerchief while you are in the room. All household members and the isolated person should wash their hands often, using soap and warm water.

### **How do I know if I need to go to the Doctor?**

If you have concerns about the symptoms you are experiencing call BC NurseLine at 811 or call your physician office for advice.