Purpose:
It is the responsibility of all Children’s Health System employees to help prevent the spread of Novel H1N1 Influenza A virus. Symptoms are similar to seasonal influenza and may include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported vomiting and diarrhea.

Rationale:
Novel H1N1 is a new and different influenza virus that is spreading from person to person worldwide. Spread of this virus is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu is spread.

Seasonal human influenza viruses are spread from person to person primarily through large-particle respiratory droplet transmission (e.g., when an infected person coughs or sneezes near a susceptible person).

Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close contact between source and recipient persons, because droplets do not remain suspended in the air and generally travel only a short distance (<1 meter) through the air.

Contact with respiratory-droplet contaminated surfaces is another possible source of transmission. Because data from Novel H1N1 influenza viruses is limited, the potential for ocular, conjunctival, or gastrointestinal infection is unknown.

Since this is a novel influenza A virus in humans, transmission from infected persons to close contacts might be common. All respiratory secretions and bodily fluids (diarrheal stool) of the Novel H1N1 influenza A cases should be considered potentially infectious.

Policy:
° Wash hands before and after contact with the patient. Use hand gel if hands are not visibly soiled.
° Initiate Droplet precautions (surgical mask) for all patients with influenza-like illness who are not confirmed or a suspected Novel H1N1 Influenza case.
° Initiate Airborne (N95 mask) and Contact Precautions for all suspected or confirmed cases of Novel H1N1 influenza virus.
° Precautions will remain in place for duration of illness or until patient is discharged.
Policy (cont’d):

° Barriers to be worn upon entry to the patient’s room
  • Gown
  • Gloves
  • N95 mask
  • Eye protection

° Patients with suspected or confirmed case-status should be placed in a single-patient room with airborne precautions (N95 mask required). When a negative pressure room is not available, a single room with the door closed is permitted.

° The patient should be placed in a negative pressure room if suctioning, bronchoscopy, or intubation is required.

° Personnel providing care to or collecting clinical specimens from suspected or confirmed cases should wear disposable non-sterile gloves, gowns, and eye protection (e.g., goggles) to prevent conjunctival exposure.

° Visitation will be limited to family and guardians only.

° Family members/guardians are to adhere to the established isolation precautions.

° Family members/guardians will be screened for flu-like illness.

° If family member or guardian is deemed infectious, visitation will be restricted for the duration of infectiousness.

References:

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/swineflu

Alabama Department of Public Health
http://www.adph.org/H1N1Flu/index.asp?ID=3571