

Perioperative News Minute  
May 6, 2009

*Intro:*

As experts continue to understand the severity and nature of H1N1, known as swine flu, healthcare workers are striving to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's interim guidance on infection control to prevent the spread of the virus. AORN is working closely with the CDC and other experts to stay up to date on the virus developments and to share the periop perspective of those dealing with H1N1 in their communities. Listen to AORN's infection control expert Joan Blanchard share what periop nurses need to know about protecting themselves in this episode of the AORN Perioperative News Minute, your source for on-the-go reports from the perioperative world. I'm your host, Carina Stanton, Senior News Editor and Writer reporting for AORN, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses.

*Story:*

While some perioperative professionals may not be directly exposed to work with H1N1 infected patients, others may be and all healthcare workers must be prepared to care for patients at risk for carrying the virus, according to Joan Blanchard, infection control expert in AORN's Center for Nursing Practice.

"The key message for perioperative professionals is to follow CDC guidelines, that includes following proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette, which includes covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and discarding that tissue in the trash when done, using the appropriate personal protective equipment, and avoiding touching your eyes nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs. Hopefully using these steps will ensure that you are well protected."

Blanchard has helped to create an informational Web page on aorn's Web site with links to this important information so periop professionals can easily find the recommendations and guidance for swine flu that is tailored to their practice.

Some of these links include:

1. The CDC's Interim Guidance for Infection Control for Care of Patients with Confirmed or Suspected Swine Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Infection in a Healthcare Setting,
2. The CDC's Guideline for Isolation Precautions in Healthcare Settings,
3. The CDC's Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in Healthcare Settings, and Guidance from the FDA and OSHA on proper fit-testing of N95 respirators

The Web page is being updated as developments with the H1N1 swine flu continue.

Blanchard encourages any healthcare worker if influenza-like symptoms to visit their facility's employee health nurse to be checked before reporting to work.

She also stresses the importance of educating staff on disaster management plans for infectious disease outbreaks.

"Communication with staff and with infection preventionists and state and local health departments is critical to effective infection control and prevention of H1N1 and other infectious outbreaks. Even if this

virus slows down in terms of infection rates, it could reemerge during the next flu season, so we must always be prepared with proper resources and education to protect our patients.”

To find the latest information on the H1N1 swine flu for perioperative professionals, visit [www.aorn.org/News/SwineFlu](http://www.aorn.org/News/SwineFlu).

*Conclusion:*

This concludes another episode of the Perioperative News Minute brought to you by AORN News. Be sure to read the latest perioperative news updates at [aorn.org/news](http://aorn.org/news). To contact the news staff with questions, comments and news tips, email [aornnews@aorn.org](mailto:aornnews@aorn.org). Thank you for listening.