

February 21, 2008

TO: Cedars-Sinai Medical Staff  
Group CSHS Management

FROM: William Brien, M.D.  
Chief of Staff

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**RE: Requested Actions to Reduce Spread of Respiratory Viruses**

We have been seeing an increase in the number of patients with viral respiratory illnesses -- even more than we usually see during the flu season -- so to protect our patients, especially those who are severely immunocompromised, the Medical Center is initiating several actions, outlined below.

**1. Don't hesitate to consider contact precautions and droplet precautions for patients with even mild fever or cough.** We all need to have an abundance of caution during this flu season, so better to err on the side of safety: Pre-emptively placing patients on these isolation precautions is encouraged during this respiratory illness season.

**2. Healthcare professionals who have any of the following signs of a cold or other respiratory infection should take the respective actions noted below:**

- If you have **fever (above 100°F)** or symptoms that are likely to interfere with the ability to perform your duties, please do not come to work.
- If you have respiratory symptoms that may be attributable to a viral infection (**cough, sneezing, runny nose, congestion, etc.**) you should practice Universal Precautions (i.e., good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cover cough, etc.). Masks are not indicated.
- If you provide **direct care to patients who are at higher risk for problems from respiratory infections (e.g., patients with bone marrow transplants, heart/lung transplants, or patients in NICU)**, and you have symptoms of a viral infection (cough, sneezing, runny nose, congestion, etc.), you should not be in direct contact with your patients until your symptoms resolve.

**3. Please advise your patients and their visitors of our temporary restrictions to minimize the chances of spreading a respiratory virus:**

- Visitors who currently have any signs of a cold or other respiratory infection (cough, sneezing, runny nose, fever, congestion, etc.) may not visit patients at this time.
- In addition, children under 12 years of age -- whether or not they have any signs of a cold -- may not visit any patient care area, with the exception of Pediatrics and Obstetrics. They may visit the lobbies on each floor, however.

**4. As at any time of the year, frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of infection. Please be sure that everyone washes their hands frequently, whether at the hospital or at home or at work. It helps protect you and everyone else!**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Hospital Epidemiology at 310-423-5574; email [GroupRNEpidemiology@cshs.org](mailto:GroupRNEpidemiology@cshs.org). Thank you for doing your part to help protect our patients.