

The practice of **good personal hygiene** is one of the **most effective strategies** any individual can implement to reduce the risk of being infected by the influenza virus, among other things.

Important points are:

↗ When to wash hands:

- › Whenever your hands are visibly dirty.
- › After sneezing or coughing.
- › After blowing your nose.
- › After using the restroom.
- › After changing a baby's diaper.
- › Before preparing, handling or serving food.
- › Before eating.
- › Before putting on or taking out contact lenses.
- › After handling garbage.

↗ What to use to wash hands:

- › With ordinary soap and water; antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- › If a sink and running water are not available, you can use alcohol hand wipes or alcohol-based (60% to 70%) hand rub, gels, foams or liquids.

↗ Hand washing with soap and water:

- › Wet your hands.
- › Apply soap.
- › Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds without neglecting any part.
- › Scrub all surfaces, including between your fingers, fingertips and wrists.
- › Rinse your hands under running water.
- › Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
- › Use the towel or a paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- › Do not share your towel with other family members. Cloth towels should be changed every day.

↗ Using an alcohol-based hand rub (waterless soap):

- › A hand sanitizer should only be used when your hands are not visibly dirty.
- › Apply 5 ml (1 teaspoon) of sanitizer to your hands.
- › Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds without neglecting any part.
- › Scrub all surfaces, including between your fingers, fingertips and wrists.
- › Let your hands dry in the air.
- › If a sink is not readily available or if there are not enough sinks, disinfectant wipes can be used to remove any visible dirt on your hands before you use the alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

↗ Become "touch aware" and avoid touching surfaces that are likely to have been touched by others (door handles, stair railings, etc.).

↗ Temporarily avoid handshaking, social kissing and other social rituals that involve touching others.

↗ Use a tissue for cleaning/blowing the nose and dispose of it after use.

↗ Be careful with respiratory secretions when around other people (e.g. coughing and sneezing). If possible, avoid contact with individuals at risk (small children or those with underlying or chronic illnesses) until respiratory symptoms have resolved.

↗ Respiratory hygiene:

- › Cover your mouth, ideally with a facial tissue, when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands afterwards.
- › If you don't have a tissue, cough into the bend of your elbow or your upper sleeve since these locations are not normally in contact with people or objects.
- › Spit into a facial tissue.
- › Dispose of used tissues in a lidded, lined garbage can. If the can does not have a lid, keep it out of the reach of children. Once the container is full, tie the garbage bag securely closed and put it out for regular trash pickup. Afterwards, wash your hands.

↗ Using a face mask:

- › Wash your hands before touching the mask.
- › Place the mask over your mouth and nose with the flexible nosepiece upwards. If the mask is coloured, the coloured side should face outward.
- › Shape the flexible nosepiece to the bridge of your nose.
- › Position the bottom edge under your chin. The mask should completely cover your nose, mouth and chin.
- › The strings should be tied behind your head or the elastic loops placed behind your ears. The mask must fit snugly on your face.
- › Do not allow the mask to hang around of your neck. Avoid touching the mask once it is in place.
- › When to change your mask:
 - » A mask should only be used once. Your mask should be changed if it:
 - ◆ Becomes damp or wet.
 - ◆ Makes breathing difficult.
 - ◆ Becomes damaged or visibly soiled.
 - » Dispose of used masks in a lidded, lined garbage can. If the can does not have a lid, keep it out of the reach of children. Tie the garbage bag securely closed and put it out for regular trash pickup. Wash your hands after removing your mask.

Sources: • United Nations Avian Influenza and Pandemic Threat Portal • Organisation de la sécurité civile du Québec