



April 10, 2013

Respiratory Protection for Exposure to Novel Influenza A (H7N9) Virus – Healthcare Workers

The recent occurrence of a novel influenza A (H7N9) virus confirmed in poultry and humans from multiple provinces in China has generated inquiries regarding the use of respiratory protective devices to help minimize occupational exposure to the H7N9 virus. At this time, there is no evidence of human to human transmission, although the possibility is being investigated. In addition, no recommendations have been issued regarding the use of respiratory protection by the general public for these most recent influenza cases. It is important to note this document is not a substitute for the guidance of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Please frequently consult their websites for the most current information regarding the influenza A (H7N9) virus.

China CDC: <http://www.chinacdc.cn/en/>

U.S. CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

WHO: <http://www.who.int/en/>

China CDC

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in their English document "Questions and Answers about human infection with A(H7N9) avian influenza virus" dated 31 - 3 - 13, is currently recommending that healthcare workers should follow standard, droplet and contact precautions when receiving suspect or confirmed H7N9 cases. Airborne precautions, including use of respiratory protection, are not required at this time.

(http://www.chinacdc.cn/en/ne/201303/t20130331_79282.html)

WHO

In the WHO document "Frequently Asked Questions on human infection with influenza A(H7N9) virus, China" dated 5 April 2013, health care workers are instructed to utilize both standard infection control precautions and additional precautions as described in "Infection prevention and control of epidemic- and pandemic-prone acute respiratory diseases in health care" published in June 2007. The 2007 document indicates that "A particulate respirator at least as protective as a NIOSH-certified N95, EU FFP2 or equivalent (see section A2 for details) is the minimum level of respiratory protection



required for HCWs performing aerosol-generating procedures associated with a documented increased risk of respiratory pathogen transmission." The document also describes that a particulate respirator preferably be selected if the transmission mode of the organism is unknown, or known or suspected to be airborne, or if the healthcare worker is undertaking an aerosol-generating procedure on a potentially infected patient. Additional information regarding the use of respiratory protection is contained within the document.

(http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/faq_H7N9/en/index.html)
(http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/swineflu/WHO_CDS_EPR_2007_6/en/index.html)

U.S. CDC

In the official CDC Health Advisory "Human Infections with Novel Influenza A (H7N9) Viruses", published on 5 April 2013, the CDC recommends that "healthcare personnel (HCP) caring for patients under investigation for novel influenza A (H7N9) virus infection should adhere to Standard Precautions plus Droplet, Contact, and Airborne Precautions, including eye protection, until more is known about the transmission characteristics of the A (H7N9) virus." Airborne precautions include the use of respiratory protection. At this time, no cases of human infection with influenza A (H7N9) viruses have been detected in the United States.

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/han00344.asp>
http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007IP/2007ip_part3.html

Please frequently consult the websites above for the most current information regarding the influenza A (H7N9) virus.

In U.S. workplaces, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements for respiratory protection (29 CFR 1910.134) must be followed including medical evaluation, training, and fit testing for employees required to use respirators in the workplace. In countries where the OSHA standards do not apply, health care workers and other employees required to wear a respirator should follow applicable national workplace standards, regulations and policies concerning use, fit-testing/checking and training. 3M recommends that fit testing and training always be conducted.