

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

**INFLUENZA VIRUS
EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN**

Adapted from BCIT's Safety Manual – Influenza Virus Exposure Control Plan

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1. Introduction

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a respiratory infection caused by the influenza viruses. A variety of strains of the influenza virus circulate year-round throughout the world, causing local outbreaks or epidemics. In Canada, influenza season usually starts in November and runs until April. It is estimated that approximately 10-25% of Canadians may get influenza each year. Although most of these people recover completely, as many as 8,000 Canadians die every year from pneumonia related to flu or complications of flu.

Pandemic influenza is a global scale outbreak of human influenza. Last century there were three pandemics that occurred when a radical change took place in the influenza A virus causing a new strain to emerge. Of particular importance, the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 killed between 20 and 40 million people globally.

On the 24th April 2009, a new influenza virus A/H1N1 mixing swine, bird and human strains of the influenza virus was identified in the National Microbiology lab in Winnipeg, Canada. The virus has been confirmed to spread from human-to-human.

This Influenza Virus Exposure Control Plan focuses primarily on seasonal influenza but can be applied to the prevention and control of pandemic influenza. In the event of a pandemic, actions will be taken under the direction of the Emergency Management Committee (EMC).

2. Purpose

This control plan has been developed to

- a. prevent exposure of Kwantlen employees, students, contractors and visitors to influenza viruses;
- b. ensure a system of reporting on, and alerting against influenza outbreaks at Kwantlen;
- c. provide awareness and educational information on influenza, the associated symptoms, and corresponding preventive and control measures.

The plan is applicable to all employees, students, contractors and visitors of Kwantlen.

3. Applicable Legislation and Reference Materials

This plan is consistent with and based upon information from

- a. [Fraser Health Authority](#);
- b. [Vancouver Coastal Health Authority](#);
- c. [Public Health Agency of Canada - Influenza](#);
- d. [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety - Influenza](#) ;

- e. [World Health Organization \(WHO\) - Influenza](#);
- f. [BC Centre for Disease Control - Influenza - "the flu"](#);
- g. [WorkSafeBC - General Information about Avian Influenza](#);
- h. [WorkSafeBC - Regulation- Exposure Control Plans](#).

Please refer to the above organizations for further information.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Kwantlen is committed to protecting the health of employees, students, and visitors. Employees and students shall be made aware of the potential risks of pandemic influenza and protect themselves by following the precautions that are outlined in this Exposure Control Plan.

4.1 Kwantlen Responsibilities

Support the Influenza Virus Exposure Control Plan by

- a. ensuring awareness and education on prevention of seasonal influenza and pandemic is provided to employees and students by their supervisors, as needed;
- b. advising the community in the event of a sufficient number of flu cases on campus.

4.2 Emergency Management Committee

- a. Develop and maintain an effective Influenza Virus Exposure Control Plan.
- b. Ensure compliance with this Exposure Control Plan.
- c. Facilitate response and coordinate emergency response to epidemic or pandemic influenza at Kwantlen and provide the appropriate communication to the Kwantlen community.
- d. Act as an advisory resource for preventing/reducing transmission of influenza.
- e. Arrange influenza and pandemic awareness and education for employees and students, as needed.
- f. Review the Exposure Control Plan as necessary.
- g. Provide updated information and input regarding influenza prevention and pandemic preparation.
- h. Provide advice and any necessary assistance in the event of epidemic or pandemic influenza at Kwantlen.
- i. Monitor reported flu incidences at Kwantlen.
- j. Notify Manager, Occupational Health & Safety in the event of a potential flu outbreak on campus.
- k. Consult with our Unions through our Emergency Advisory Committee.

4.3 Supervisor

- a. Ensure that employees and students have awareness of this Exposure Control Plan.
- b. Ensure that work practices minimize the risk of exposure to the influenza virus.
- c. Monitor the workplace to ensure that safeguards are used, precautions are taken and work procedures are followed.
- d. Ensure that employees or students who develop symptoms of influenza-like-illness (ILI) seek medical assistance immediately, follow the directions from medical professionals and stay home if necessary. Greater attention should be paid to those who return from traveling to or coming from countries where there are reports of epidemic influenza.

4.4 Employees and Students

- a. Read and understand the Exposure Control Plan, as necessary.
- b. Attend awareness and education sessions, when provided.
- c. Faculty and students in departments who are occupationally involved in contact with patients during their practicum must follow the guides and OHS regulations developed by the WHO, BCCDC, Health Authorities, individual practicum site and WorkSafeBC with regard to influenza and pandemic.
- d. Be aware of pandemic and epidemic warnings and follow the guidance from appropriate public health agencies.
- e. Take corresponding preventive measures as necessary.
- f. Self monitoring after traveling to, or coming from, countries or provinces where there is a high incidence of influenza.
- g. Restrict contact with those who have flu symptoms and/or who are under medical observation.
- h. Follow the advice of local health authority.

5. Risk Identification, Assessment, Communication and Mitigation

5.1 Risk Identification and Assessment

In the event of a major epidemic flu at Kwantlen or a pandemic, actions must be taken under direction of the EMC. The EMC and other applicable stakeholders may hold a joint meeting to evaluate the risk for Kwantlen. The risk identification and exposure assessment would be based on the following factors:

- a. The area(s)/region(s) where pandemic influenza cases have been identified and the connection to British Columbia;
- b. Whether any Kwantlen employee or student visited or came from the area(s)/region(s) where cases are occurring;
- c. The information provided by external agencies (WHO, BCCDC, Health Canada, etc.);
- d. The number of cases and the trend (increasing/decreasing) of the incidence;
- e. The number of students and employees providing care in external health care institutions;
- f. Employee and student awareness and use of preventative measures;

- g. Effectiveness of preventative measures;
- h. Effectiveness of communication to address the Kwantlen community.

The outcome of this risk assessment may result in the activation of the following:

- a. Kwantlen Influenza Virus Exposure Control Plan;
- b. Kwantlen Emergency Response Plan;
- c. Emergency Operations Centre.

5.2 Risk Communication

In the event of a major flu epidemic the EMC will issue health alert notices for all staff and students. These notices will be based on information provided by the World Health Organization, local health authorities, BCCDC, etc.

5.3 Risk Mitigation

Kwantlen employees and students will be informed to take preventative measures to protect against influenza viruses. Preventative measures may include:

Personal Hygiene

Good personal hygiene is the key to reduce the risk of infection and the spread of influenza from an infected person to a healthy individual. The following hygiene practices are recommended:

- a. wash hands often and well, especially after contact with fluid from your nose, mouth, throat or eyes (i.e. coughing or sneezing or blowing the nose). Hand washing should be done using soap and for a minimum of 20 seconds. Alcohol-based (minimum 60% alcohol) waterless hand rinses should not be substituted for hand washing, but used as additional protection;
- b. cover mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing;
- c. dispose of used tissues or other articles that have come in contact with fluid from your nose, throat, mouth or eyes into regular waste bins;
- d. avoid sharing eating and drinking utensils;
- e. avoid direct contact with ill persons;
- f. regularly clean all surfaces that are possibly contaminated with the viruses;
- g. avoid frequently going to crowded places whenever possible;
- h. ensure good sleep, diet and exercise habits in order to maintain good health;
- i. avoid contact with those animals that are suspected to carry the viruses;
- j. avoid touching your face (eyes, mouth, nose, etc.) with possibly contaminated objects (hands, pens/pencils, water bottles, etc.).

Vaccination

Kwantlen Polytechnic University will work with the local health authorities to inform employees and students with regular information updates in regards to vaccination clinics within the community.

Decontamination

Kwantlen is committed to regularly cleaning all public areas, classrooms and offices. In the event of an epidemic, additional measures will be put in place to ensure areas and surfaces that have been identified by the Public Health Association of Canada as having been contaminated or possibly contaminated will be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and ventilated. The EMC will coordinate these efforts in conjunction with the Public Health Association of Canada.

Reporting & Monitoring

Epidemiological surveillance and early reporting play important roles in the prevention and limiting the spread of influenza. In the event an individual has a fever over 38.0°C (100.4°F), after visiting an area affected by a pandemic and has one or more of the symptoms associated with the pandemic influenza such as: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, headache, muscle aches, sore throat and fatigue, they must report their symptoms to Healthlink BC (811) to seek medical advice as soon as possible.

At the time of an epidemic/pandemic to assist in assessing the risk at Kwantlen all students and staff are asked to self report suspected and confirmed cases as follows:

Students

- a. All confirmed epidemic/pandemic flu cases on campus should be immediately reported to the Manager, Occupational Health & Safety.

Employees

- a. All suspected epidemic/pandemic flu cases on campus should be immediately reported to the staff member's Supervisor.
- b. All confirmed cases should be reported to the Manager Occupational Health & Safety who will report confirmed case(s) at Kwantlen to the local health authority as necessary and update the EMC as appropriate.

Employees and/or students who have had contact with an individual(s) who have confirmed epidemic/pandemic influenza cases will be notified where possible by Kwantlen.

Travel

Individuals who have traveled to an area/country where the pandemic influenza has been present may attend Kwantlen and work on campuses if no suspicious symptoms have been developed. However individuals returning from an area/country with the pandemic influenza cases should monitor their health for 10 days after arrival to British Columbia. If symptoms such as the ones listed above develop they should contact Healthlink BC (811) for further advice.

Kwantlen will regularly monitor travel advisories and travel warnings issued by Foreign Affairs Canada. At the time of a pandemic, travel decisions will be made consistent with policy K.2 International Travel and Security.

Personal Protective Equipment

Use of personal protective equipment will be assigned based on direction given by the applicable authorities (WHO, Health Authorities, BCCDC, etc.). Personal protective equipment includes respiratory protection, eye protection and skin protection. Facemasks and respiratory protection equipment must be appropriately chosen and fit-tested and must be stored or disposed properly.

Business Operations

Should pandemic or a major influenza epidemic occur, Kwantlen will respond and may temporarily alter business operations, including and up to partial or full closure. These decisions will be addressed through Kwantlen's policy on Unscheduled Campus Closure and Cancellation of Classes (F.12).

Instructional Programs

The VP Academic & Provost will coordinate continuity of instruction. In the event that KPU closes for a period of time due to a pandemic, consideration will be given to the timing and duration of the closure in such a way as to support student success. With respect to closures and student absences caused by influenza, Senate will make decisions on academic issues pursuant to its authority under the University Act.

Administrative Services

The VP Human Resource Services will coordinate policies and procedures related to staff functions. The Executive Director Facilities Management will oversee facilities management issues and facility maintenance. The Finance department is responsible for providing financial services. This includes processing and issuing employee pay-cheques, paying bills, and ensuring funds can be procured for any necessary outside vendors. The VP Finance & Administration will coordinate.

6. Education

Kwantlen's Emergency Management Committee will arrange ongoing education on influenza prevention by means of bulletins, websites, brochures and seminars.

Kwantlen Employees and students are also encouraged to use the websites provided by Government of Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, BCCDC, Health Authorities (Fraser & Vancouver Coastal) and WHO to acquire general information on influenza.

7. Work Placement/Practicums

Students and instructors conducting practicum(s) and/or working in a high-risk setting are required to strictly follow the work procedures, prevention guidelines and precautions established by the appropriate health authorities, WHO and the practicum site.

8. Documentation and Record Retention

Records related to influenza virus control plan implementation and monitoring will be kept by the Manager Occupational Health & Safety.

9. Program Review

This Control Plan will be reviewed annually by the EMC for the following:

- a. the most updated information on the epidemic and pandemic influenza;
- b. the effectiveness of this Exposure Control Plan;
- c. documentation for awareness and education.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Communicable Period

The time during which an infectious agent may be transferred directly or indirectly from an infected person to another person, from an infected animal to human, or from an infected person to animal, including arthropods (insects and related species).

Contagious Period

The time period during which the influenza virus may be spread from person to person or from living object to nonliving object to living object (such as person to object to person).

Disinfection

The killing of infectious agents on objects and surfaces by direct exposure to chemical or physical agents.

Droplet precautions

Precautions taken to prevent the spread of infectious agents by droplet transmission.

Droplet transmission

The transmission of organisms, such as a bacteria or viruses, by large droplets (greater than 5 microns in diameter) produced by sneezing, coughing, talking or singing. These droplets are propelled a short distance (1 meter/3 feet or less) through the air and can come in contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth of another person, thus infecting them.

Epidemic

The occurrence of cases of an illness (or an outbreak of illness) in a community or region more often than would normally be expected.

Host

A person or other living animal infected by an organism such as a virus.

Immunity

Resistance to an infectious agent usually associated with the presence of protective antibodies or cells.

Immunize

To make immune, that is able to resist a particular disease, most often through administration of a vaccine delivered by a needle.

Incubation period

The time interval between initial contact with an infectious agent and the first appearance of symptoms associated with the infection.

Indirect transmission

The transmission of a pathogen from an infected person to an inanimate object and then to another person.

Infection

A condition in which organisms multiply within the body and cause a response from the host's immune defenses. Infection may or may not lead to clinical disease.

Infection control

Activities aimed at the prevention of the spread of pathogens between people or animals.

Infectious agent

A disease-causing virus, bacterium, parasite, or other microbe.

Infectious disease

A disease of humans or animals resulting from an infection.

Influenza

A highly contagious and common respiratory illness caused by a virus. There are three known types of influenza virus: A, B, and C.

Isolation

The separation of an infected person or animal, during the communicable period of a disease, from others to prevent the spread of the infection to others.

Pandemic

A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease. An influenza pandemic may occur when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. With the increase in global transport, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions in some areas, epidemics due to a new influenza virus are likely to take hold around the world, and become a pandemic faster than before. WHO has defined the phases of a pandemic to provide a global framework to aid countries in pandemic preparedness and response planning. Pandemics can be either mild or severe in the illness and death they cause, and the severity of a pandemic can change over the course of that pandemic.

Pathogen

Any organism capable of producing disease.

Pneumonia

An inflammation of the lungs caused by infection.

Quarantine

Restriction of the activities of well persons or animals who have been exposed to a case of communicable disease, during its period of communicability, in order to prevent transmission of that disease during the incubation period if infection should occur.

Respiratory etiquette

Simple tips to keep respiratory infections from spreading such as covering your nose and mouth every time you sneeze or cough; using a tissue when you blow your nose; putting used tissues in the trash; and washing your hands frequently, especially if you or someone you are close to is sick.

Social distancing

A way to reduce the risk of exposure to an organism, such as the influenza virus, by reducing or avoiding contact with other people as much as possible.

Strain

A specific genetic variant of an organism.

Sub-clinical infection

The presence of an infection without recognizable signs or symptoms. Of importance because an individual may appear well although infected and thus be capable of spreading the infection to others.

Supervisor

A Kwantlen employee who instructs and/or directs employees and/or students in the performance of their duties and activities.

Surveillance

An on-going, systematic method for continuous monitoring of diseases in a population, in order to detect changes in disease patterns and implement prevention and/or control measures in a timely fashion.

Susceptible

A person or animal not possessing sufficient resistance against a particular pathogenic agent to prevent contracting infection or disease when exposed to the agent.

Symptoms

Any perceptible change in the body's normal function, appearance or sensation, which is experienced by the patient and indicates a disease process.

Transmission

Any mechanism by which an infectious agent is spread from a source of infection to other persons or animals.

Vaccination

The act of administering a vaccine.

Vaccine

A dead or weakened form of an infectious organism that is injected into the body to stimulate an immune response, without causing disease, and thereby protect against subsequent infection by that organism.

Virus

A group of infectious agents characterized by their inability to reproduce outside of a living host cell. Viruses may subvert the host cells normal functions, causing the cell to behave in a manner determined by the virus.