

May 27, 2003

## Work Quarantine

Quarantine is the term used when well people are asked to isolate themselves from others after a possible exposure to SARS. People go into quarantine after they have had either an exposure to a SARS patient or a setting where SARS has been transmitted, e.g. a specific hospital. Quarantine is a preventive measure to ensure that in those rare cases where the quarantined individual does become ill, the infection is contained.

**Work quarantine** allows some health care workers to continue to work at the hospital or health care setting where they were exposed as long as they remain well. Work quarantine is necessary to ensure health care services continue to be provided. Work quarantine does **not** apply to members of the general public who have been asked to go into quarantine.

### Rules for work quarantine:

- When individuals in work quarantine are not at work, they are to follow the rules of home quarantine as outlined below.
- The health care worker must wear an N95 mask at all times while at work and practice diligent hand hygiene. They must eat in a separate room if at all possible. If this is not possible, they must stay at least two metres away from others while eating.
- Individuals on work quarantine should commute to work alone in a private vehicle if at all possible. If they must be in a private vehicle with someone else, the quarantined individual must wear an N95 mask.
- The health care worker cannot enter another hospital site except as authorized by the Medical Director/Administrator of the second site.
- Quarantined health care workers with offices in the community will be allowed to see essential patients in their offices. Routine check-ups and other non-essential visits should be deferred. The quarantined worker and all other office staff must wear an N95 mask at all times and practice diligent hand hygiene.
- The quarantined health care worker must monitor their temperature twice a day. **They must immediately stop work and notify their local health unit if they develop a fever or any other symptoms such as a headache, sore muscles, chills, cough or shortness of breath.**

### While at home:

- Remain at home, do not leave your house and do not have anyone visit you at home. Family or household members do not have to be isolated or quarantined at home, unless a member of the household is diagnosed with SARS.
- Wear a mask when you are in the same room with another member of your household.
- Change your mask as directed. Family or household members do not have to wear a mask.
- Do not share personal items, such as towels, drinking cups or cutlery.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Sleep in separate rooms.
- Measure your temperature with your own thermometer twice a day over the ten-day period. Do not share thermometers with other members of your household.
- If anyone in the household develops fever (more than 38° C or 100.4° F), muscle aches and pains, severe fatigue, dry cough, shortness of breath, severe headache, or is feeling unwell, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.