

COVID-19 PROTOCOL FOR PHARMACY

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Every Pharmacy must prepare a COVID -19 response plan specific to your operations and ensure all staff are familiar with it. The plan must detail measures in place to address all areas of the operation to mitigate spread of covid-19 virus amongst clients and staff.
- Implementation of a robust continuing education and training system at the establishment to ensure all staff members are fully aware of the risk that exists according to duties and mitigation measures to minimize risk and exposure to covid-19.

SIGNAGE:

- Adequate posters and information should be placed in an around the medical facility to provide relevant information/ reminders on COVID-19 action plan to both guest and staff for example frequent handwashing, frequent use of hand sanitizers, cough and sneeze etiquette etc.
- Signage must be installed in high-traffic area indicating proper use and disposal procedures for masks.
- Post a sign(s) at the entrance(s) and throughout the store alerting customers that they must follow the 6ft separation rule.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPLOYER

- Appropriate facilities (inclusive of appropriate disinfectants and instructions) for employees to maintain good hand hygiene, Environmental hygiene and PPE for staff
- Document protocols and continuously sensitize staff
- Tissue and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Continuous supply of soap, water and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Provide Hand sanitizer in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Provide protective personal Equipment not limited to gloves, surgical mask, gowns where necessary for staff.
- The employer shall provide accurate and consistent information to employees, to include but not limited to:
 - Sensitization
 - Updates on local and international situations (non-sensitive/classified information)
- Adapt emergency response plans so that social distancing is maintained in an emergency. In a fire, the priority will be to just get out of the building but once people have safely evacuated, social distancing can be re-established.

- Provide sanitizing stations for staff and customers entering and leaving store.
- Consider appropriate policy to address employee (s) with underlying health conditions

OPERATIONS

- Everyone entering the pharmacy should wear a face covering, regardless of symptoms.
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should always wear a facemask while they are in the pharmacy for source control.
- Special considerations must be made for clinics that are co-located in pharmacies.

FILLING PRESCRIPTIONS

Although the actual process of preparing medications for dispensing is not a direct patient care activity, the other components of medication dispensing such as prescription intake, patient counseling, or patient education may expose pharmacy staff to individuals who may have respiratory illness. To this end, pharmacy staff should:

- Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol on counters for use by customers and have sufficient and easy access to soap and water or hand sanitizer for staff.
- Encourage all prescribers to submit prescription orders via telephone or electronically. The pharmacy should develop procedures to avoid handling paper prescriptions.
- After a prescription has been prepared, the packaged medication can be placed on a counter for the customer to retrieve, instead of being directly handed to the customer. Other strategies to limit direct contact with customers include:
 - Avoid touching objects that have been handled by customers.
 - If transfer of items must occur, pharmacy staff should wash their hands afterwards with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Always avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

STRATEGIES FOR PHYSICAL DISTANCING BETWEEN PHARMACY STAFF AND CUSTOMERS:

- Use engineering controls where the customer and pharmacy staff interact, such as the pharmacy counter, to minimize close contact:

- Minimize physical contact with customers and between customers. Maintain social distancing (6 feet between individuals) for people entering the pharmacy as much as possible.
- Use signage/barriers and floor markers to instruct waiting customers to remain 6 feet back from the counter, from other customer interfaces, and from other customers and pharmacy staff.
- To shield against droplets from coughs or sneezes, install a section of clear plastic at the customer contact area to provide barrier protection (e.g., Plexiglas type material or clear plastic sheet). Configure with a pass-through opening at the bottom of the barrier for people to speak through or to provide pharmacy items, if feasible.
- For hard non-porous surfaces, clean with detergent or soap and water if the surfaces are visibly dirty prior to disinfectant application.
- Frequently clean and disinfect all customer service counters and customer contact areas.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, and doorknobs.
- Discontinue the use of magazines and other shared items in pharmacy waiting areas. Ensure that the waiting area is cleaned regularly.
- Promote the use of self-serve checkout registers and clean and disinfect them frequently. Encourage the use of, and have hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes available at register locations for use by customers.
- Use administrative controls— such as protocols or changes to work practices, policies, or procedures — to keep staff and customers separated:
 - Promote social distancing by diverting as many customers as possible to drive-through windows, curbside pick-up, or home delivery, where feasible.
 - Include text or automated telephone messages that specifically ask sick customers to stay home and request home delivery or send a well family member or friend to pick up their medicine.
 - Limit the number of customers in the pharmacy at any given time to prevent crowding at the pharmacy counter or checkout areas.
 - Pharmacists who are providing patients with chronic disease management services, medication management services, and other services that do not require face-to-face encounters should make every effort to use telephone, telehealth, or tele-pharmacy strategies.

VEHICLES: Used for the transportation of staff and pharmaceuticals

Cleaning and disinfecting vehicles. (to be done at the end of every work day)

- When cleaning the vehicle, persons should wear face mask and disposable gloves.
- Doors should remain open when cleaning the vehicle

- All surfaces that are frequently touched should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected using 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution or commercially approved disinfectant.
- Clean interior of vehicle with neutral detergent
- Rinse the interior of the vehicle with a bleach solution of 1:10 bleach to water
- Allow the bleach solution to remain for 10 minutes
- Rinse thoroughly with clean water
- Allow the vehicle to air dry

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Increase frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection, emphasizing cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces such as customer service counters and customer contact areas, workstations, keyboards, telephones, and doorknobs.
- Use standard procedures for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Use the proper concentrations of disinfectant and allow required wet contact time.