

# Droplet Precautions

Droplet precautions are guidelines for the care of a person who has a disease that spreads through droplets from mucus or secretions from the nose, mouth, lungs, throat, or airways. Examples of the most common diseases spread by droplets include pertussis, influenza, diphtheria, invasive *Neisseria meningitidis*, and some types of pneumonia. To prevent the disease from spreading to other people, follow the guidelines below.

## What are the guidelines for patients?

If you have a disease that can be spread through mucus or secretions, follow these guidelines at the hospital or clinic:

- Check with your health care provider before you leave the room where you are being treated.
- Wear a mask if you go to another area of the hospital or clinic. Make sure the mask fits tightly.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze.
- Try to stay at least 3 ft (1 m) away from another person while talking.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



## What are the guidelines for visitors?

If you are visiting a person in the hospital who has a disease that can be spread through mucus or secretions, follow these guidelines:

- Check with a health care provider before you enter a room that has a sign that says "Droplet Precautions."
- If you are allowed to enter the room, you will be asked to wash your hands and wear a mask over your nose and mouth. Make sure that the mask fits tightly. You may also be told to wear eye protection.
- **Do not** take off your mask in the room. If you were told to wear eye protection, **do not** take it off in the room.
- **Do not** eat or drink in the room unless you ask a health care provider first.
- **Do not** use or touch anything in the room unless you ask a health care provider first.
- Right after you leave the room:
  1. Take off your mask and eye protection. Throw them in the trash.
  2. Wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## Summary

- Droplet precautions are guidelines for the care of a person who has a disease that spreads through droplets that come from mucus or secretions from the nose, mouth, lungs, throat, or airways.
- If you are a patient, check with a health care provider before you leave the room where you are being treated. Wear a mask as told. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

- If you are a visitor, check with a health care provider before you enter the patient's room. Wear a mask over your mouth and nose. You may also be told to wear eye protection. **Do not** eat or drink in the room before you ask a health care provider. **Do not** touch anything in the room unless you ask a health care provider.
- For both patients and visitors, wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Following these guidelines helps to prevent the disease from spreading to other people.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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