

# Airborne Precautions

Airborne precautions are guidelines for the care of a person who has a disease that spreads through particles in the air (*airborne disease*). Examples of airborne diseases include measles, chickenpox, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and tuberculosis. Following these guidelines helps keep the disease from spreading to others.

## Guidelines for patients

If you have an airborne disease, follow these guidelines at the hospital or clinic:

- You will be treated in a private room with a special air supply.
  - Keep the door to your private room closed.
  - Wear a mask in your room as told by your health care provider.
  - Check with your nurse before you leave your room.
- Wear a mask if you must go to another area of the hospital or clinic. Leave your room only for medically necessary purposes. Make sure that the mask fits tightly.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze.
- If you have infectious lesions, keep the affected areas covered.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



## Guidelines for visitors

If you are visiting someone who has an airborne disease, follow these guidelines:

- Check with a nurse before you enter a room that has a sign that says "Airborne 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.
- **Do not** take off your mask in the room.
- **Do not** eat or drink in the room.
- **Do not** use or touch any items in the room unless you ask a nurse first.
- Right after you leave the room:
  1. Take off your mask. Throw it in the trash.
  2. Wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## Summary

- Airborne precautions are guidelines to prevent the spread of illnesses that can be spread through the air (*airborne diseases*).
- If you are a patient, keep the door to your room closed. Wear a mask. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Check with your nurse before you leave the room.
- If you are a visitor, check with the nurse before you enter the room. Wear a mask. **Do not** take it off while in the room. **Do not** touch items in the room.
- For both the patient and visitors, washing hands with soap and water is the best way to prevent spread of disease. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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.