



NO FLU FOR YOU!

Notice to Vendors of Influenza Immunization Policy

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Influenza can present as mild to severe disease, and contributes to more than 36,000 potentially preventable deaths annually in the United States.

Transmission of influenza in the healthcare setting is an under-recognized but substantial safety concern that puts patients, staff and visitors at risk. Preventing the spread of influenza requires a comprehensive infection control program that includes work practice controls to reduce and prevent disease transmission. Vaccination of both patients and their contacts is essential in the prevention of influenza transmission.

Banner Health desires to have all those that come into contact with our patients immunized against influenza. In order to achieve this goal, we are implementing a multi-year influenza immunization campaign, starting with the 2011 influenza season.

Banner Ironwood Medical Center (BIMC) is piloting a required influenza immunization policy. This policy applies to all staff, medical staff, volunteers, students, contract personnel and vendors that enter BIMC locations where patients may be present during influenza season.

The following requirements are in effect September 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012:

- Proof of influenza immunization must be provided to Supply Chain Management by December 1, 2011, unless you have a medical or religious exemption.
- If you cannot be immunized for influenza, you will be required to wear a procedural mask for the duration of your visit, from December 1, 2011- March 31, 2012 each time you visit BIMC and enter an area where patients may be present. Frequently asked questions regarding mask use are attached.

We thank you for your assistance in providing a safe environment for our patients.

Mask Use by Non-Immunized Staff during Flu Season Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I need to wear a mask?

While influenza immunization is the most effective way to prevent the flu, some people cannot receive the flu shot due to medical or religious reasons. The flu virus can be spread before you feel sick. Wearing a mask when in patient care areas during flu season protects the patient in the event you have the flu virus and protects you from getting the flu from sick patients.

When do I need to start wearing a mask?

Flu season typically occurs from December to March each year. Staff not receiving the flu shot will need to wear a mask while in any area within BIMC that patients may be present from December 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012, unless otherwise communicated by the Chief Medical Officer.

What should I tell patients about why I am wearing a mask?

It is important to always communicate well with our patients. Some possible messages for patients include:

I am wearing a mask because I care for your safety.

It is currently flu season. Staff who cannot receive the flu shot will wear a mask for your protection.

What mask do I use?

Standard procedural masks can be used. These same masks are also used for patients that are in Droplet Isolation and are available in all patient care areas. You do not need to use a N95 respirator mask- these are only for airborne isolation patient rooms (ie. TB).

Can I reuse my mask?

You may reuse your mask for the duration of your shift under the following conditions:

- Mask is worn in hallways and elevators where patients may be present
- Mask is worn to provide care to a non-isolation patient
- Mask is intact and dry
- You can keep your mask in your pocket for repeated use

You should **NOT** reuse your mask for the following:

- If your mask becomes moist or unable to be sealed completely against your face
- **Isolation patients- all masks worn into isolation patient rooms should be discarded upon exiting the room and hand hygiene performed**