

THE ADVISOR

MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

Reducing the Spread of Respiratory Illnesses This Fall

Fall is here and with it brings football, cooler temperatures, and changing leaves. Unfortunately, it also brings increased respiratory illnesses. Some common respiratory illnesses are influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), adenovirus, rhinovirus and COVID-19. These illnesses are caused by a viral infection.

Respiratory viruses can affect both the upper and lower respiratory tract. An upper respiratory virus is defined as affecting anything above the vocal cords, while the lower respiratory illnesses affect areas below the vocal cords. Symptoms range from mild (those that affect the nose and throat) to more severe symptoms that can cause serious lung infections, such as pneumonia. Other symptoms of these illnesses are:

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- New loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue

What is a good way to distinguish between these different viruses? It's different for different viruses, such as:

- Testing is the only way to distinguish between influenza and COVID-19. The only difference between the two is the symptom of new loss of taste or smell with COVID-19.
- A tell-tale symptom of RSV is wheezing.
- There are many different types of rhinoviruses. Rhinoviruses are the most frequent cause of the common cold and a common trigger for asthma attacks.
- Adenoviruses typically cause mild colds or flu-like symptoms. However, adenoviruses can develop symptoms such as acute bronchitis, pneumonia, and pink eye (conjunctivitis).

Newsletter Content

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Improved Support for TMC Online Courses

Halloween Safety Tips from Our OSHA Expert

There are vaccines available for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV. There is no vaccine available for rhinoviruses nor is there a vaccine for adenovirus for the general public. There is a vaccine available to military personnel for adenovirus type 4 and 7.

Transmission of these illnesses occur in a similar format:

- COVID-19 is reportedly transmitted by a combination of droplets and airborne particles. These particles can travel up to 6 feet and may be carried through the air in droplets so small that they stay in air currents and can be inhaled.
- Influenza is reportedly spread by large droplets when a person coughs, talks, or sneezes.
- RSV can be spread through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of infected people when they cough and sneeze. It can also be spread through direct contact, such as kissing the face of a child or touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your face (i.e., touching a contaminated doorknob and then touching your face without washing your hands).
- Adenoviruses are spread through close contact, such as shaking hands, through the air by coughing and sneezing, and by touching a surface with adenovirus on it and touching your face without washing your hands.
- Rhinoviruses are spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can be inhaled by others in close proximity. Direct contact such as handshakes and hugging infected people can also spread rhinovirus.

Healthcare personnel must adhere to infection control guidelines to protect themselves, patients, and coworkers from getting sick. A summary of infection control recommendations to reduce the spread of infection are:

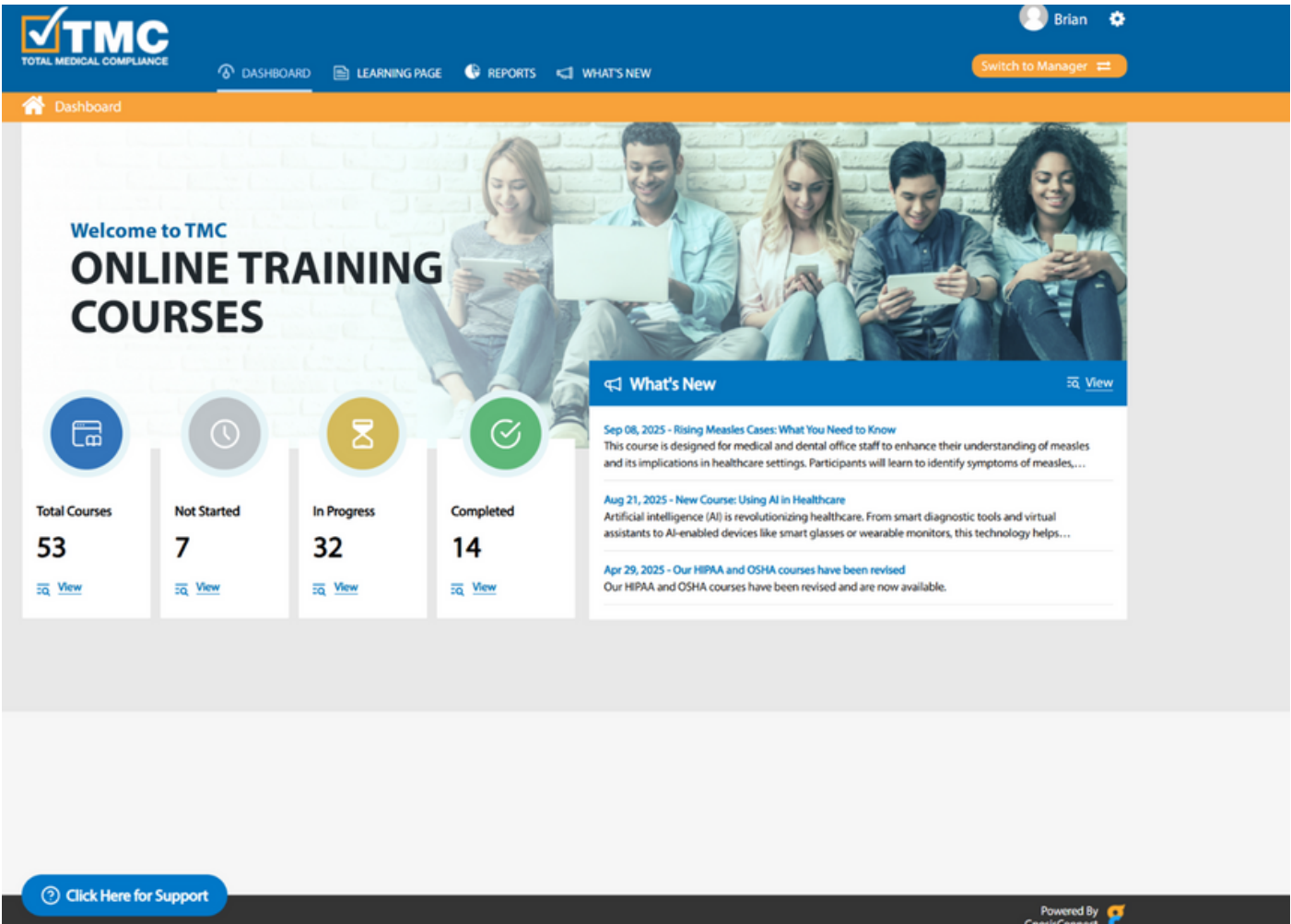
- Wash your hands. Hand hygiene is the single most critical measure to reduce the spread of infection to your patients and coworkers. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled or dirty, after caring for patients with norovirus or difficile, before you eat, and after you go to the restroom. Alcohol based hand rubs can be used at other times such as before donning personal protective equipment (PPE) and after removing PPE. When using alcohol-based hand rubs ensure you use the correct amount and rub your hands for at least 15 seconds, or until your hands are dry.
- Get vaccinated. Stay up to date on vaccines and encourage your patients to do the same. It is recommended that all healthcare personnel stay up to date on vaccines.
- Practice respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Place a "Cover your Cough" sign in the reception room. Have tissues, hand sanitizer, and waste cans readily available for your patients.
- Post signage or utilize patient messaging to alert patients who have symptoms what the protocols for your facility are such as:
 - Wear a mask,
 - Sit away from others, and
 - Clean their hands after having contact with respiratory secretions.
- Check that the air handling in your facility is functioning as it should. Consult engineers to ensure that ventilation systems are operating properly. Make sure nothing is blocking air vents.
- Clean and disinfect your clinical contact surfaces utilizing an EPA registered hospital level disinfectant with kill claims for these viruses. Ensure the proper protocol for cleaning then disinfecting is strictly followed. The contact time of your disinfectant must be met. Follow instructions for use for the disinfectant and make sure you read the labels correctly.
- Regular environmental cleaning is also a necessity. Reception areas, kitchen areas (breakrooms), and restrooms are high traffic spaces where germs can spread. These areas must be routinely cleaned.

Following these measures and guidance from CDC along with other resources, healthcare personnel, including dental healthcare personnel, can provide a safe and healthy environment for patients as well as employees.

Disclaimer: These are not all inclusive for symptoms or infection control recommendations. There may be more!
Need help with an infection control plan for your dental or medical office? TMC has on-site training programs available to make sure your practice is compliant!

Improved Support for TMC Online Courses

TMC is excited to announce that obtaining support for Gnosis just became easier. By selecting the ‘Support’ button, located on any screen, you can send an email directly to our Gnosis support team.



Simply click on the button that says, “Click Here for Support,” and the following screen will come up.



When you click on “Contact Support,” another screen will appear that will allow you to send a ticket directly to Gnosis support.

A 'Contact Support' form with a blue header bar containing the title and a close button. The form has four main input sections: 'Your Name' with the value 'Brian Fay', 'Email ID' with the value 'brian@totalmedicalcompliance.com', 'Issue Title' with the value 'Test issue', and 'Query Content' with the value 'Test issue'. Below these is a file upload section with a 'Choose File' button and the text 'No file chosen'. At the bottom is a large blue 'Submit' button.

The user’s information will automatically populate. All the user needs to do is describe the issue in the “Query Content” section and click the Submit button.

Halloween Safety Tips from Our OSHA Expert

Help Make This Halloween Safe and Fun!

Halloween is a time of fun, imagination, and sweet treats—but it also comes with a few extra safety concerns. Whether you're trick-or-treating with little ones, prepping your home for visitors, or behind the wheel, these tips will help everyone stay safe and happy.

Costume Safety

- Choose flame-resistant costumes, wigs, and accessories.
- Add reflective tape or glow sticks to costumes and treat bags for visibility after dark.
- Use non-toxic makeup instead of masks that can block vision.
- Make sure costumes fit well to avoid tripping. Shoes should be comfortable and secure.
- Avoid sharp or long costume props (like swords) that could cause injury.

Trick-or-Treating Tips

- A trusted adult should always accompany young children.
- Plan a safe route for older children going out alone and agree on a return time.
- Stay in well-lit, familiar areas, and travel in groups.
- Cross streets at designated crosswalks—never between parked cars or from driveways.
- Teach kids not to enter homes or cars and to carry a flashlight if it's dark.
- Wait until returning home to eat any candy, and check treats first, especially for kids with food allergies.

Safety for Drivers

- Drive slowly in residential areas—when trick-or-treaters are out.
- Watch for children walking along streets, medians, or crossing mid-block.
- Use caution when entering or exiting driveways and alleys.

Prep Your Home for Visitors

- Clear walkways of toys, wet leaves and any additional tripping hazards.
- Turn on porch lights to welcome trick-or-treaters.
- Secure pets indoors to avoid accidents or scares.

Pumpkin & Decorating Safety

- Let children draw faces on pumpkins; adults can handle the carving.
- Use battery-operated candles or glow sticks in jack-o'-lanterns instead of real flames.
- Keep carved pumpkins away from foot traffic and never leave them unattended when lit.

Candy & Allergy Awareness

- Offer non-food treats like stickers, glow sticks, or small toys for children with allergies.
- Examine all treats before kids eat them. Throw away any unwrapped or suspicious items.
- Avoid choking hazards for toddlers (no gum, popcorn, or small candies).

Healthy Halloween Habits

- Serve a nutritious meal before trick-or-treating to curb candy cravings.
- Ration candy over the following days or weeks, keeping the experience fun but reasonable.

A little preparation goes a long way in making sure this holiday is full of treats—not tricks!
Have a fun and safe Halloween!

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Instructions

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

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Need to contact us? Scan the QR code for all the ways to get in touch!