

SFMH **House Calls**

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STOP For Safety

The big red STOP sign is a familiar sight on our roadways but not a symbol we expect to see in our Hospital entrances. However, just as the roadway signs are essential to our safety in traffic, the STOP sign in the Hospital is critical to your health.

In response to the swine flu alerts (now referred to as H1N1 virus, STOP signs and self-screening stations have been set up at all public entrances of the Hospital and at the entrance to the St. Francis Health Center. Notices posted at the stations instruct each person to use the alcohol based hand rub provided and to put on a mask if they have a cough before proceeding into the Hospital or Health Centre. The alcohol based hand rub should also be used when leaving the hospital after removing the mask (if you are wearing one).

It is critical that EVERYONE who enters the Hospital follows these instructions for their own protection and the protection of others. Use of the alcohol based hand rub should be used by patients, family members (including children) and anyone else who is entering either building. This does not just apply to those who are feeling ill.

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Hands spread an estimated 80 percent of common infectious diseases like the common cold and flu whether it is the H1N1 flu or the regular seasonal flu. For example, when you touch a doorknob that has the flu virus on it and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes you increase the risk of getting sick. The good news is that proper handwashing or the use of alcohol based hand rub will stop that transmission.

People entering the building are required to use the alcohol based hand rub each time (even if they are not sick) because they can be carrying germs that are not harmful to themselves as a healthy person, but can be harmful to those who are already sick and have less resistance to fight off germs. If you are a patient seeking medical treatment, stopping to use the alcohol based hand rub can help to limit the spread of harmful germs to others including the staff working on the front lines to care for you and your family.

When leaving the building you should also use the alcohol based hand rub. This helps to ensure that you will not be carrying germs on your hands into your homes.

So please, when you enter the Hospital – obey the big red STOP sign. Place your hand under the pump and it will automatically dispense the right amount of alcohol based hand rub solution. Rub it over your hands and between your fingers for 15 seconds. It takes less than a minute but can make a huge

difference. And if you're coughing, put on a mask. If your child is coughing, be sure to that they wear a mask as well. Let's work together to protect ourselves, our hospital and our community.