



BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Paul Murphy
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

26th September 2023

PQ Number: 38625/23-Deputy Paul Murphy-To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 701 of 11 July 2023, the IPC measures that are in place across healthcare settings for airborne pathogens, the effectiveness of these measures at preventing spread of airborne pathogens; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

Thank you for your representation.

Most recent IPC guidance from the DOH National Clinical Guideline (NCG) No 30 on Infection Prevention and Control informs the measures for appropriate management of for airborne pathogens. This guidance is available at <https://www.gov.ie/IPCclinicalguideline>.

Recommendation 15 of this NCG specifically addresses airborne precautions:

Airborne precautions, in addition to standard precautions, are implemented in the presence of known or suspected infectious microorganisms that are transmitted from person-to-person by the airborne route and when Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPS) associated with an increased risk of infection are performed on people with known or suspected infectious microorganisms normally transmitted by the droplet route.

Airborne precautions reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms that remain infectious over time and distance when suspended in the air. These microorganisms may be inhaled by susceptible individuals who have not had face to face contact with (or been in the same room as) the infectious individual. Infectious microorganisms for which airborne precautions are indicated include measles virus (rubeola), chickenpox (varicella) and M. tuberculosis. Other respiratory viruses, specifically SARS-CoV-2, may sometimes be transmitted by the airborne route.

The key aspects of applying airborne precautions included in this NCG relate to:

- Standard precautions, including respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Appropriate ventilation.
- Use of appropriate PPE, particularly correctly fitted FFP2 respirators.



- Minimising exposure of people who use healthcare services and healthcare workers to the infectious microorganisms.

The NCG on IPC also states that it is good practice to wear correctly fitted and fit checked respiratory protection (FFP2 respirator) when entering the patient-care area when an airborne-transmissible infectious microorganism is known or suspected to be present and when entering the patient care area where Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) associated with an increased risk of infection are performed on people with known or suspected infectious microorganisms normally transmitted by the droplet route.

I hope this provides you with some assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sharon Hayden', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer