Infection Control Branch

Guidance Note on Monitoring of Body Temperature

When there is a spread of infectious diseases in community, routine monitoring of body temperature can aid early detection and segregation of persons with fever and respiratory symptoms with others, which is an effective measure to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Use of infrared forehead thermometer

2. Infrared forehead thermometer is often employed for temperature screening because of its convenience. A study* reported that infrared forehead thermometer does not provide a reliable temperature readings. Therefore, it is prudent to have a second mean (e.g. infrared ear thermometer) for those with doubt of the first reading by infrared forehead thermometer.

Persons with fever and respiratory symptoms should

(a) refrain from work or school, and minimize social contact;
(b) wear masks, be vigilant to hand hygiene and respiratory manners;
(c) seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Special Attention during Serious or Emergency Response Level

3. Schools
Schools are places where people congregate, students should have temperature check daily before attending school. When having fever, refrain from school. Schools also have the discretion to initiate the measure at according to own situation.

4. Offices and other institutions

Apply the same principles as temperature monitoring in schools.

5. Hospitals

(a) Patients (administered by hospital staff): At least daily temperature check for inpatients and report of clustering to hospital infection control team.

(b) Staff (including contract out staff): staff should conduct daily body temperature check. Mandatory record is not required. Supervisors and the hospital infection control team should monitor the number of sick staff and alert to any clustering.

(c) Visitors: General publics will be advised to take temperature check by themselves. They should not visit hospital if they have fever.

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Reference

Annex

Reference range for temperature screening

There are few methods for measuring body temperature, categorized as oral, rectal, armpit, ear and forehead. Before using a thermometer, read the instructions carefully for proper operation as well as the reference range of the readings. Accuracy, suitability, convenience and acceptability by user should all be taken into account when choosing the appropriate thermometer.

Body temperature varies with age, time of day and level of physical activity. For screening purpose, temperature above the reference range quoted below will be considered as significant and one should consult a doctor for suspected fever.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measuring method</th>
<th>Celsius scale (℃)</th>
<th>Fahrenheit scale (℉)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tympanic</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectal</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armpit</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: Read the instructions carefully for the reference range of the readings when using different methods of taking body temperatures.