

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 0:03

Hola y bienvenidos to this special episode on Salud Talks, we are continuing to explore infection control in healthcare settings. As part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Project Firstline program Salud America at UT Health San Antonio is working with the National Hispanic Medical Association to bring Project Firstline content to Latino frontline health care workers. In this week's episode we are exploring Preparing for the Next Pandemic.

Hi, I'm Dr. Amelie. Ramirez, is director of the Salud America and its home base, the Institute for Health Promotion Research at UT Health San Antonio, it's my pleasure to serve as your host for this special series on infection control. I'd like to introduce our first guest, Dr. Jorge Moreno, Dr. Moreno, please tell us a little bit about what you do.

Dr. Jorge Moreno 0:57

Thank you so much for having me. My name is Dr. Jorge Moreno. I'm an assistant professor of medicine at Yale School of Medicine. And I have two main roles, which is I do clinical work with a primary care practice and I've been here for about five years. And I also do a subspecialty clinic in obesity medicine at the clinic in addition to my role as faculty at the medical school.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 1:21

And our next guest is Dr. Elena Rios. Dr. Rios, can you please tell us more about what you do?

Dr. Elena Rios 1:28

Sure. I'm the president and CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association, and also the president of the foundation's called the National Hispanic Health Foundation. And I guess what I really do is coordinate programs and meetings and do advocacy in Washington DC, where I live for the improvement of health of Latinos.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 1:52

Thank you. Let's jump into today's topic. Part of preventing the next pandemic starts with your hands. Dr. Moreno, can you talk us through how to properly wash your hands?

Dr. Jorge Moreno 2:04

Using soap and water you want to first step, wet your hands, and then you want to apply the soap. You want to remember to cover all areas of your hands and you want to really rub your hands for at least 15

to 20 seconds. Then you want to rinse your hands with water and dry with a paper towel. After that, you want to turn off the faucet with a towel.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 2:29

Also is hand washing better than hand sanitizer? Which is better?

Dr. Jorge Moreno 2:34

Yeah, it's important to remember that alcohol based hand sanitizers are more effective at cleaning germs. They're easier to use when caring for patients, and there's also less irritation and dryness of your hands when using these hand sanitizers.

And there's been some studies that also show that there's increased adherence to hand hygiene when using the sanitizers. But there are some times when it's important to use soap and water, and it's critical to use soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled, before eating, after using the bathroom. So you really want to follow the guidelines of your hospital, including the wearing of protective equipment like gloves and gowns.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 3:23

When should healthcare workers be washing their hands in the healthcare setting?

Dr. Jorge Moreno 3:28

When you should really wash your hands are before and after touching a patient. Before performing any sterile procedures such as placing an indwelling device or when handling any medical devices. You want to really wash your hands if you're cleaning a patient, you want to clean your hands when you're moving from a soiled body part to a clean body part to really prevent infection.

You want to wash your hands after touching any bodily fluids and, and of course, wash your hands after removing your gloves, after eating also, after using the restroom after using the bathroom I think is also important.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 4:08

Can you give us an example of how poor hand hygiene might contribute to the spread of disease in a healthcare setting?

Dr. Jorge Moreno 4:16

Yes, so it's important to remember that germs can stay under fingernails for longer time even after hand washing. So there's a recommendation to have your fingernails not be longer than your fingertips. So you want to trim them to be short to prevent infection.

There's been some research that shows that people that wear jewelry like rings, there's more germs underneath the area where a ring would be. So consider not wearing jewelry when working in a healthcare setting to really help prevent infection.

In hospitals, there's some common infections such as C. Diff infection that is can really spread quickly and cause a lot of problems in a healthcare setting. If you don't follow the proper hand hygiene protocols of your hospital and wearing gloves if, especially for C. Diff infection, wearing a gown. And then before exiting the room and after being with a patient, you want to remove your gloves and your gowns inside the room and you want to really soap and water to really help prevent any spread of disease.

And I think that that would be really important for prevention of a spread of disease and really could be a problem if there's poor hand hygiene, especially with these types of infections. And then I also would follow the disinfecting and cleaning protocols that your hospital or healthcare setting uses to really prevent any further spread of disease across different patient rooms or different settings in the hospital.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 6:00

Definitely, we want to stop the spread of disease and prevent future pandemics, so we need to use more than our hands. Dr. Rios, can you speak to the importance of using gowns, gloves and eye protection when treating patients with airborne and blood borne infectious diseases?

Dr. Elena Rios 6:18

Well, I think it's very important that people realize that we need to protect ourselves as health providers, whether you're a doctor or nurse, or tech, who's, you know, collecting blood from a patient in the hospital, because you never know what diseases a patient has, those diseases that are transmissible and certainly want to protect yourself from those infectious diseases.

I think one of the most important things you you don't really realize this is if you don't have gloves on and you could just easily touch the blood of the patient as you're sticking the needle in causing the

opening of the skin or you could just have a splash that, that that happens to hit you in the eyes. So you have to be careful.

In terms of rashes, we all know I, well, I'm maybe not everybody now, but I was I was little and had chickenpox, and I know how it spreads to all of my sisters and, you know, got the chickenpox. And I think it's important to realize that airborne diseases like that are very contagious, in our families, especially that live together. And in terms of wounds and that have draining of pus, for example, again, you need to wear gloves to protect yourself from the germs that are part of the the wound.

And then lastly, I think the cough, what's important about coughing, is that you realize that the patient should have a mask, if they're around others. So again, to decrease the air, air flowing germs and also the ventilation in the rooms need to you need to be sure that the air ventilators are not blocked. And it's probably good to wear a mask yourself so that you don't, you know, get coughed all over yourself. So, so lots of, you know, very important rules for infectious disease control.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 8:16

Dr. Moreno, we understand that you played a critical role in providing the Latino community with Spanish-language COVID-19 information as a physician and community liaison, how can we improve our communication techniques if another pandemic should happen?

Dr. Jorge Moreno 8:34

Yeah, so I think it's extremely important, and that we saw it all with COVID, that the message needs to be clear and simple in a way that the community can understand exactly what's going on. I think that using a very clear message will be the foundation.

I think that it's also was very important during the pandemic to realize that one person cannot do everything. I think it's a team-based approach, that you have a lot of team members, including organizations that are, that can support you during that time, in terms of getting the message out to the community, including community health care workers, including religious leaders, and including organizations such as an NHMA and Salud, and really trying to create, you know, reliable resources for the community so that they understand what's going on and what the message will be going forward if another pandemic would arrive.

And using all the all the tools to really address the community and then also being able to hone in on their concerns and being able to try to dispel some of the misinformation that's around on social media would be very important for the next pandemic, really getting ahead of it because it's really hard to move forward if there's a lot of misinformation in social media regarding this.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 10:07

Great. Well, Dr. Rios, is there anything else that you'd like to add as far as how can we prepare for the next pandemic?

Dr. Elena Rios 10:13

Yeah, I think the next pandemic could be right around the corner, knowing our climate change and lots of changes around the environment. You never know when it's going to happen. Next virus that will be released globally, and cause a lot of major structural havoc in our communities. I think what we really need to do is to prepare people to understand the lessons learned from the COVID 19 pandemic.

And especially in our networks, the National Hispanic Medical Association networks, we have a lot of Latino doctors that take care of Latino patients. And they need to really focus on the need for more education in our communities, especially the Spanish-speaking because they don't hear the information from the CDC. And we're the ambassadors and with Amelie, with with your great work in communications, we know how important it is to educate our communities and we're trusted messengers.

So I think that what we can do is to increase our networks and continue to train doctors and residents and medical students, and even pre-med students who want to feel like they're helping. They can help by being part of the communications strategies that we're all working on with CDC and Project Firstline.

Dr. Amelie Ramirez 11:38

Dr. Rios, thank you so much for sharing with us your insightful information and just the importance of getting this information to our community and how important it is.

As workers on the frontline of health care, we need to do all we can to make sure we are prepared to control the spread of disease in health care settings for everyone's benefit, I would urge you to check out the CDC Project Firstline's training materials, available at bit.ly/ipctrainingnew.

Well, thank you very much to our special guests, Dr. Moreno and Dr. Rios for for sharing your thoughts. We want to thank Dr. Rios and Dr. Moreno for joining us in this discussion, and we appreciate their perspectives on this topic of preparing for the next pandemic. We hope you enjoyed listening and learning with us during this special podcast series of CDCs project first line, and we'll see you next time!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>