

Protect yourself. Protect others.

# H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu)

## Information for residential aged care facilities 23 June 2009

### 'Protect' phase

Victoria is in the 'Protect' phase of its Influenza Pandemic Plan. While this will change the way flu is being managed in the community, it does not change the previous advice about management of residents with flu-like illness in residential aged care facilities. The 'Protect' phase includes:

- Control of outbreaks in high risk institutional settings, such as aged care facilities.

### When to report

Continue to report any clusters of three or more cases of respiratory illness where the onset of symptoms have occurred within 72 hours of each other. Call the public health line on 1300 651 160 during office hours and 1300 790 733 after office hours.

In the case of a reported outbreak, Public Health will advise aged care services about management strategies required.

### Current case definition for H1N1 Influenza 09

For adults it is the acute onset of illness with a measured temperature of  $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  or significant history of fever (rigors, sweating, chills) plus two or more symptoms of cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue/tiredness or shortness of breath. Check [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au) regularly for updates.

Some people have reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with Human Swine Flu.

The virus has so far been mild and can be compared to normal seasonal flu. Like seasonal flu, Human Swine Flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

### How H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) spreads

Spread of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) virus is happening the same way seasonal flu spreads, mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing or by touching something with the influenza virus on it, then touching their mouth or nose.

### Be prepared

Make sure your facility is prepared for the potential of either a suspected or confirmed case of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza), and that there are appropriate plans and procedures in place to deal with an outbreak.

### Good hygiene remains vital

Good health hygiene can reduce the chance of spreading the flu virus. Remind your residents and staff to:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

See the next page for more practical tips and reminders.

### Further information resources

For more information about H1N1 influenza 09 visit the Department of Health and Ageing's emergency website at: [www.healthemergency.gov.au](http://www.healthemergency.gov.au).

The Victorian Government website ([www.humanswineflu.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanswineflu.health.vic.gov.au)) has an extensive range of information regarding the current human swine flu outbreak, including information for healthcare workers, businesses and the general public. There are numerous resources available to view and download, including:

- a range of factsheets about human swine flu, including more information on what the 'Protect' phase means for Victoria
- frequently asked questions
- Posters – 'cover your cough and sneeze' and 'wash your hands regularly' which may be useful within your facility
- medication information
- media releases

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)

Call the Swine Influenza Hotline Tel 180 2007

Call Nurse-on-Call Tel. 1300 606 024 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)

## What you can do

Follow these tips to help protect your facility against infection and the spread of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) and normal seasonal flu.

Preparing your facility for seasonal flu	Preparing your facility for 'human swine flu'
<p><b>Immunize against seasonal influenza</b></p> <p>If you have not done so already, organise for all of your residents and staff to be vaccinated against seasonal influenza. While this is unlikely to protect against H1N1 Influenza 09, being vaccinated helps minimise the risk of staff and residents catching seasonal flu variants. Flu vaccinations are free of charge for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• residents, staff and volunteers aged 65 or over (50 years for those of aboriginal/Torres strait islander background)</li> <li>• all direct care staff in public sector facilities</li> <li>• Not-for-profit and private facilities may consider providing influenza vaccination for direct care staff as part of their internal immunisation and business continuity plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Educate your visitors and remind staff</b></p> <p>Educate visitors to your facility on the risk posed to your residents by influenza. Ask them not to visit the facility, and ask any affected staff to stay at home, if they are feeling unwell.</p> <p><b>Increase health and hygiene measures</b></p> <p>Hand hygiene is the best defence against influenza transmission and remains vital before any contact with residents, particularly after coughing or sneezing. Flu season hygiene procedures should be followed, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular hand washing with soap and water, or an alcohol based hand rub</li> <li>• covering nose and mouth if sneezing and coughing</li> <li>• encourage residents, staff and relatives to use disposable tissues instead of handkerchiefs and place them into plastic lined rubbish bins</li> </ul> <p>The virus may persist on hard surfaces for 1-2 days, particularly in cold or low humidity conditions and may remain viable on hands for 5 minutes.</p> <p>Proper sterilisation and hygiene procedures should be followed throughout your facility to limit the spread of any virus.</p> <p><b>Follow usual Blue book processes</b></p> <p>If you encounter an influenza outbreak in your facility, regardless of type, follow the usual processes outlines in the Blue Book (found at: <a href="http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/bluebook">www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/bluebook</a>) Specific infection control measures should be implemented in the case of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a laboratory confirmed case of influenza</li> <li>• three or more staff and/or residents showing flu-like symptoms within 72 hours</li> <li>• in these cases, notification should also be made to the Public Health Branch of the Department of Human Services by calling 1300 651 160</li> </ul> <p>The Commonwealth 'Influ-info Kit' outlines these procedures and can be found at: <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-publicat-influinfo.htm">www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-publicat-influinfo.htm</a></p>	<p><b>Isolation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should not work if they have flu-like symptoms</li> <li>• Visitors should be discouraged from attending the facility if they have flu-like symptoms</li> <li>• If three or more people show flu-like symptoms with 72 hours, or if a doctor diagnoses human swine flu at your facility, you should report it following the usual protocols</li> <li>• For any suspected or identified cases in your facility, follow the quarantine and isolation advice given by the Department of Human Services</li> </ul> <p><b>Business Continuity</b></p> <p>It is vital that your business continuity plans are in place so that your business can function during times of disruption. The plan needs to consider issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing levels and service continuity</li> <li>• Maintenance (you may consider reducing routine processes or delaying non-critical maintenance)</li> <li>• Managing external contracts</li> <li>• Communication strategies</li> </ul> <p>Plus much more. For more information refer to the Australian Government's <i>Pandemic Influenza Workbook: Building Resilience through business continuity and pandemic planning</i> which can be found at: <a href="http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/Document/s/pandemic_influenza/workbook.pdf">www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/Document/s/pandemic_influenza/workbook.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Supplies</b></p> <p>Ensure you have enough supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) during an outbreak e.g. gloves, gowns and masks, including standard surgical and P2 (N95) respirators if available. The Commonwealth <i>may</i> release more masks from the stockpile if the Australian human swine flu outbreak worsens. Also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing the number of routine deliveries to your facility</li> <li>• Implementing a robust inventory system to monitor PPE supplies within your facility</li> </ul>