

Wednesday, 1 July 2009

VICTORIAN H1N1 INFLUENZA 09 UPDATE

A 68-year-old man has died with H1N1 Influenza 09, Victoria's Deputy Chief Health Officer, Dr Rosemary Lester said today.

"His death was notified to the Department late yesterday," Dr Lester said.

"The man was being treated for a life-threatening cancer and was later diagnosed with H1N1 Influenza 09. He died while receiving treatment in hospital.

"Our sympathies are with the family and we will respect their request not to release further details of his medical history.

"It is important to remember that in the vast majority of cases, human swine flu is a mild illness which many people recover from without any medical treatment.

"However, we know that for people with chronic medical conditions, influenza can be severe.

"In Victoria there have been 1,643 cases of human swine flu diagnosed as a result of laboratory testing," Dr Lester said.

"We also know that there are many milder cases in the community which have not been tested.

"People who are at high risk due to conditions such as pregnancy, respiratory disease (such as asthma), heart disease, diabetes, renal disease, obesity and immunosuppression should present to their doctor if they develop respiratory symptoms, so that they can be treated as soon as possible," Dr Lester said.

Along with the rest of Australia, Victoria is now in the protect phase as part of the ongoing response to the virus.

What does 'protect' mean?

- **Currently the majority of people experiencing flu-like symptoms are making a full recovery without medical treatment. This means that those with mild influenza will no longer be given antivirals or Tamiflu;**
- **We still recommend voluntary home quarantine if you have mild flu. Stay at home to protect others from the flu;**
- **There is a continued focus on people from high risk groups who have influenza-like symptoms: pregnant women, those with respiratory disease (such as asthma), heart disease, diabetes, renal disease, obesity and immunosuppression; and**
- **In the majority of cases schools are no longer being closed.**

For the most up-to-date information:

- Visit www.health.vic.gov.au
- Call the Influenza Hotline on 180 2007 or
- Call Nurse-on-Call on 1300 606 024 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)

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