

CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

ADVICE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF H1N1 INFLUENZA 09 AND THOSE PEOPLE WITH FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS

Why have I been asked to stay at home?

You have been asked to stay at home because you have signs or symptoms that make us suspect you may have H1N1 influenza 09, previously known as human swine influenza. Although this is a voluntary measure staying at home is very important for preventing the spread of influenza especially to those people most vulnerable* to complications or severe disease.

What is H1N1 influenza 09?

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza 09 are similar to those of local 'seasonal' influenza and include cough, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat and fever. This disease is mild in most cases and, if not severe, antiviral medication will not be required and contacts of cases do not need to stay at home.

How is H1N1 influenza 09 spread?

Personal hygiene is important, as one of the main ways that influenza viruses spread from person to person is via respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze are propelled through the air and land on the mouth or nose of people nearby. It can also be spread when a person through respiratory droplets on another person or surface then touches their nose or mouth. It is uncertain how long the virus can survive, but is thought that the virus can probably only survive on hands for 30 minutes. The virus can survive on hard surfaces for longer—up to 48 hours.

What should I do to protect other people in my household?

- ▶ You should stay at least 1 metre apart from other people to limit the spread of droplets produced through talking, coughing or sneezing.
- ▶ If possible sleep and stay in a separate room to other people (with the door closed).
- ▶ Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - If there are no tissues available, cover your nose and mouth with your upper arm rather than your hands. Wash your upper arm (or sleeve) as soon as practical if you have sneezed or coughed into it.
 - Dispose of used tissues into the nearest bin.
- ▶ Wear a surgical mask when in close contact to household members who are more vulnerable to influenza*. A vulnerable household member should

* Vulnerable people are those with chronic respiratory conditions, including asthma, cardiac disease, diabetes, chronic liver disease, impaired immunity and pregnant women.

consider wearing a surgical mask if they need to come within one metre of an ill person who is not able to wear a mask

- ▶ Wash your hands regularly with soap and running water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based gels and hand cleansers are also effective.
- ▶ Keep your personal items separate and do not share them with others in the household (eg towels, cutlery and toiletries).

What about work or school?

You should not attend work or school while you have flu-like symptoms. As long as your household members are well they can continue with normal activities outside the home including going to work and school.

Should I have visitors?

People should not visit you while you are sick. You might warn expected guests by telephone that they should not visit you while you have flu-like symptoms.

What else should be done?

▶ **Hand washing**

Ensure soap and disposable towels (if possible) are near sinks for hand washing. If disposable towels are not available, keep a towel separate from other towels for your own use (and make sure others in your household do not use it). You may wish to purchase and place alcohol-based hand gels and hand cleansers in key locations throughout your home.

- ▶ Other household members should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth unless they have just washed their hands.

▶ **Tissues**

Have a supply of disposable tissues available.

▶ **Cups and other eating utensils**

You should not share cups or utensils with other people. Your used dishes and eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. Household gloves should be worn by other people when they are touching your used cups and other eating utensils. After utensils have been washed, they may be used by others.

▶ **Laundry**

Your towels, bedding and clothing should not be shared. It is okay to wash these in a standard washing machine with warm water and detergent. Be careful when gathering laundry – you should use household gloves and not let it touch you or your clothing until it has been washed. Do not shake dirty laundry. After laundry has been washed it is okay to be used by others.

▶ **Cleaning the house**

Commonly touched surfaces such as taps, doorknobs, tables, kettle handles and fridge door handles should be cleaned frequently with normal household detergents. The home should be kept well ventilated with doors and windows open during the day if possible and safe to do so.

If you have young children in the household

It will be challenging to teach very young children cough etiquette and hand hygiene.

You will also need to clean their toys frequently.

Parents should explain to children that it is important to keep away from the germs.

Teach children to

- ▶ Wash their hands
- ▶ Cover their coughs and sneezes

Where can I get help or further information

<http://www.healthemergency.gov.au/internet/healthemergency/publishing.nsf/Content/consumers>

Centre for Disease Control (phone numbers below)

If you feel you are getting worse, please call your General Practitioner or attend your local Emergency Department.

In an Emergency call 000.

When to seek emergency care:

You and other members of your household should know how to get medical care right away (dial 000) if you:

- ▶ have difficulty breathing or chest pain
- ▶ have purple or blue discolouration of the lips
- ▶ are vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- ▶ have signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing or not passing any urine (or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry)
- ▶ have fits or seizures
- ▶ seem confused or less responsive than normal.

For more information contact your nearest GP or Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

CDC, Darwin	89228044
CDC, Katherine	89739049
CDC, Nhulunbuy	89870357
CDC, Tennant Creek	89624259
CDC, Alice Springs	89517540