

## CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

### TESTING FOR H1N1 INFLUENZA 09 (SWINE FLU)

#### **Do I need to be tested for swine flu if I get a flu-like illness?**

Probably not. Swine flu is nearly always a mild illness and now that it is widespread throughout the community it is usually not necessary to be tested. Finding out whether or not you have swine flu doesn't change the advice about what you should do.

#### **What about knowing whether to stay at home?**

It is important to stay at home (away from work, school or public places) if you have a flu-like illness until you feel better and your fever has resolved regardless of whether it is swine flu or another virus. It is also important to practice proper hygiene such as frequent hand washing and covering your mouth and nose while sneezing or coughing. This is good practice for all respiratory infections and will prevent infection in others.

#### **Should anyone get tested for swine flu?**

Only people with severe illness requiring admission to hospital, health care workers or those living in institutions such as correctional centres or nursing homes need testing for swine flu. It is important for our laboratory services to focus on these important cases.

#### **Why did people get tested before?**

At the beginning of the epidemic it was important for public health staff to know where the swine flu cases were and to respond with public health measures such as isolation, preventative treatment of contacts and school closures to contain the spread of infection. Now swine flu is widespread so these measures are no longer being taken and it is not as important to find out about every case.

#### **What should I do if I have a flu-like illness?**

If you have a flu-like illness you should stay at home until you feel better and your fever has settled without medications such as paracetamol. Most people with influenza have a mild illness and just need to stay at home until they are well. If you have a chronic medical condition or are pregnant it is important to get early medical advice as antiviral medication can prevent complications in people with risk factors. People with shortness of breath need to seek treatment early.

Keep re-hydrated by drinking fluids such as water, manage the fevers with paracetamol if needed and ensure plenty of rest. Never give aspirin, or medications containing aspirin, to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever, without first speaking to your doctor.

Remember, while cold and flu medications may relieve the symptoms, you are still capable of passing on the infection and should avoid contact with other people.

## Where can I get help or further information?

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

Centre for Disease Control.

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

In an Emergency call 000.

### **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