

Centre for Disease Control Darwin  
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**UPDATE TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS - Pandemic (H1N1) 2009**

Dear Doctor

Australia remains in the PROTECT phase for Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, in which the emphasis is on protecting those most at risk of severe outcomes. This letter is to outline some key issues with regards to the current response and to provide an update on resources available. Please refer to previous correspondence from 13 July and 27 July for further information.

**Influenza in pregnancy**

Influenza infection in pregnancy may cause increased rates of miscarriage and respiratory and cardiac conditions and in the post-natal period can be easily transmitted to the newborn infant. The recent H1N1 outbreak has increased the awareness of adverse outcomes of influenza acquired during pregnancy. To reduce the risk of complications from influenza infection in pregnancy the following measures are recommended.

- Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza should be considered a likely diagnosis for all pregnant women with an influenza-like-illness (ILI). Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) is recommended within 48 hours of symptom onset and is available from the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) that has been provided to you by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC).
- The seasonal influenza vaccine is now funded and recommended for all pregnant women in the NT. It is safe and effective in all stages of pregnancy including those who may be immunosuppressed. The vaccine is given to protect against the recognised risks of influenza in pregnancy as above and also to protect the newborn from influenza and its complications in the first 6 months of life.

**Other vulnerable groups at risk from influenza**

Current management guidelines recommend commencing oseltamivir (Tamiflu) for patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) who have underlying medical conditions that place them at risk of poor outcomes or for those with severe disease. This includes those persons with the following:

- Chronic respiratory conditions (asthma, COPD),
- Morbid obesity,
- Indigenous people of any age -to assess carefully for risk factors and chronic conditions,
- Other chronic conditions such as cardiac disease, diabetes mellitus, metabolic conditions, renal disease, haemoglobinopathies, immunosuppression and neurological conditions
- Anyone with severe illness and those requiring hospitalisation.

Please continue to utilise the NMS Tamiflu for these persons if they present within 48 hours of symptom onset. Contact your regional CDC for authorisation. After hours the CDC Dr on call can be contacted via RDH switchboard on 8922 8888.

Others requiring active monitoring include smokers, people with obstructive sleep apnoea and children under 5 years old. Refer to the 'Tamiflu fact sheet for GPs' for information on use in children. This can be found at:

[http://www.health.nt.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/37/99.pdf&siteID=1&str\\_title=Tamiflu%20Fact%20Sheet%20for%20GPs%20CDC%20Jun09.pdf](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/37/99.pdf&siteID=1&str_title=Tamiflu%20Fact%20Sheet%20for%20GPs%20CDC%20Jun09.pdf)

**Testing**

Testing is recommended only for hospitalised patients and in some sentinel surveillance situations. A new fact sheet (attached) has been developed to assist with informing the public of current testing recommendations.

**Places to obtain further resources/supplies**

The General Practice Network NT (GPNNT) will continue to provide General Practices with supplies of surgical masks on request. Please contact the GPNNT on 08 8982 1003 if required.

Further supplies of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) for at risk patients can be ordered through your regional Centre for Disease Control. In Darwin, orders must be placed by Mondays to ensure delivery to General Practices on Wednesdays. Any additional replacement stock will need to be collected from the hospital pharmacy by your practice.

For more information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 including ordering forms, reporting forms and NT fact sheets, please refer to [http://www.health.nt.gov.au/H1N1\\_Influenza](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/H1N1_Influenza). This site includes a number of audio H1N1 (Swine Flu) messages in Indigenous language under the remote health section.

Additional websites on information for individuals and households is available at:

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

and under Clinical Information find Clinical management of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

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

Yours Sincerely



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

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