



cover your cough

H1N1 INFLUENZA 09 (HUMAN SWINE FLU)

Information for parents, 27 May 2009

What is H1N1 Influenza 09?

H1N1 Influenza is a new strain of human flu affecting people in many countries around the world, including Australia. **To date, there are no known cases of this virus in Tasmania, but we are getting prepared.**

Elsewhere, the virus appears to affect mainly young people, under the age of 30. Common symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat, runny/blocked nose, headache and a general feeling of being unwell.

For most people, the virus causes mild illness. Some people get very sick, and some have died. Around half of those that get very sick have had an underlying health condition, like asthma, diabetes or lung disease. Around half of those that get very sick are people who were previously healthy.

There is no vaccine for H1N1 Influenza 09 because this is a new virus. It will take some months for vaccine to be developed, and longer for it to be available in large amounts.

Tasmania has been preparing for a disease outbreak like this for a number of years. We are as well prepared for this as any other place, but this virus could still cause many people in Tasmania to get sick, some deaths and significant community disruption.

How does H1N1 Influenza 09 spread?

H1N1 Influenza is spread from person to person in the same way as seasonal influenza and other common respiratory illnesses.

This is mostly in two ways:

1. Breathing in droplets from an infected person's uncovered cough or sneeze. (An uncovered cough can spread droplets a metre.)
2. Touching something that has the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, eyes, nostrils or anything that goes in your mouth. (Influenza viruses can survive on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours).

Flu spreads up to a day before symptoms appear. This means you can catch the flu from someone even before that person notices they are sick.

How can I protect myself and my children from influenza?

1. **Know the signs of flu.** The flu comes on suddenly. Its main symptoms are fever (high temperature), dry cough, sore throat, runny/blocked nose and headache.



2. **Use your phone.** If you or your child gets flu symptoms within 7 days of travel to an affected area, or within 7 days of contact with someone who has or is suspected of having Human Swine Flu, phone for health advice straight away. This is for your safety and the safety of people around you.

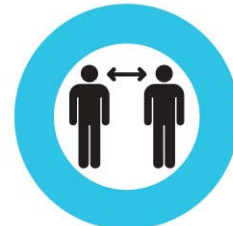
In Tasmania, phone **1800 358 362 (1800 FLU DOC)**. It's a free call, including from mobile phones.



3. **Stay home.** If you or your child has flu symptoms, stay home and away from others until you are fully recovered. This is important for all types of flu.



4. **Keep your distance.** Try to stand back from other people at work and in public. Try to keep a distance of one metre, or a very large step.



5. **Always cover your cough or sneeze.** Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or even your arm, rather than your hands which can easily spread germs. Put dirty tissues in the rubbish straight away. (Don't keep the flu in your pocket).



6. **Always wash your hands** with soap and water (or an alcohol-based hand rub) before touching your mouth, nose, eyes or anything that goes in your mouth. (Your hands could have picked up the flu virus from something you touched)

