

Medical Receptionist Fact Sheet

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu)

This fact sheet has been created to update medical receptionists about **H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu) in Victoria.**

It is intended to assist in dealing with people who may be infected with the new influenza strain H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu).

Victoria has had confirmed cases since 20 May 2009.

The illness

What is H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)?

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) is caused by a new influenza virus.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The symptoms of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also had diarrhoea and vomiting.

How does H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) spread?

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) virus is contagious and is spreading the same way seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing.

Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

DEALING WITH PATIENTS

Where is the public being directed to?

The Victorian public are being asked to contact their local GP as a first port of call if they have an influenza-like illness.

The public are being asked to **only** present to their local hospital if they are seriously ill.

We are asking all GPs to remain as the first port of call for the detection of the virus, as is the normal practice during the flu season. This is the strength of our GP based system.

We are asking all patients with flu-like symptoms to telephone ahead so that your practice can be as prepared as possible to manage them when they arrive.

Preventing cross infection

We are asking that patients call before attending a hospital/general practice, to ensure that appropriate PPE is available on arrival.

Posters should be displayed in waiting areas advising patients who meet the case definition and are showing symptoms to advise staff as soon as possible.

Patients who are potential cases of the new influenza strain should be triaged for rapid review to avoid the potential for cross infection in the waiting room. If possible the patient should wear a surgical mask.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All patients assessed to be a suspected case of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine flu) should be given a surgical mask to wear as soon as possible after arrival and be isolated in a single room where available.

When it is necessary for a health care worker to come within one metre of the patient, a surgical mask together with protective eyewear, disposable gloves and disposable gown should be worn by the staff member. If the case is not able to wear a surgical mask then the health care worker should wear a P2 mask instead.

If the health care worker is dealing with a patient who is not a suspected case of H1N1 influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu), but may be a suspected case of seasonal influenza, a surgical mask should be worn by the health care worker coming within one metre of the patient.

P2 masks are recommended when undertaking aerosol generating procedures on a suspected or confirmed H1N1 influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu), including the **collection of nose and throat swabs.**

All health care workers in the room for an aerosol generating procedure should be wearing a P2 mask, protective eyewear, disposable gloves and disposable gown.

Promote good health and hygiene

Good hygiene practices can reduce the chance of you getting the flu or passing it on to others. Promote good health and hygiene in the practice – posters are available on the www.health.vic.gov.au website.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

For more information

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