



**Otago**  
**District Health Board**  
*Poari Hauora-ā-rohe ki Ōtāgo*



## Influenza A (H1N1) - DRAFT

### Media Update No 10

8 May at 1350 hrs

**Please note: We will not provide any more media releases unless the situation changes.**

Since the response to Influenza A (H1N1) began on April 27, Public Health South staff have managed three suspected cases and 41 contacts of suspected cases in Otago and Southland.

Of the suspected cases, two have since tested negative for Influenza A (H1N1) and we are waiting for the results of tests on the third person, Otago and Southland Medical Officer of Health Dr Marion Poore says.

So far, there have been no confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) in Otago and Southland. One suspected case is still in isolation and two contacts of suspected cases are in quarantine.

However, Influenza A (H1N1) is still a concern because it is a novel (new) virus and no-one is immune to it. As winter approaches, seasonal influenza is also more common and we need to minimise the potential for Influenza A (H1N1) to mutate with the seasonal influenza virus and create another novel virus to which no-one is immune, Dr Poore says.

In New Zealand, there is no evidence the disease is spreading at a community level - from person-to-person. That suggests effective border management, prompt isolation and quarantine measures and good basic hygiene practices have helped. They are all important tools for protecting our communities.

The Otago and Southland DHBs' Incident Management Team will continue to do the planning which would be necessary if the DHBs needed to set up Community Based Assessment Centres (CBACs) - to provide relief and support for medical centres and hospitals. The team is also still refining detailed hospital plans for managing a major infectious event.

Public Health South will continue to manage the public health aspects of Influenza A (H1N1) across both Otago and Southland; surveillance for increased levels of influenza in our communities, nurse support at airports for border agencies for international flights and the management of suspected cases and their close contacts.

We remind everyone with concerns about H1N1 to either phone the national toll free phone line on 0800 FLULINE (0800 3585 463) or their medical centre. They should not just show up at hospitals or medical centres.

We would also like to remind people of the importance of those basic hygiene practices. People can be their own best protection against all infectious diseases by remembering to **CHIRP**:

**C**over your mouth when you cough, with your elbow or a tissue

**H**ands – wash them often

**I**solate yourself by maintaining a personal space of 1.5m and stay home if you are sick

**R**educe germs in your home and workplace by cleaning with disinfectant

**P**repare yourself and your family by creating an emergency plan and influenza kit.

The best way to wash your hands is:

### Hand Hygiene Technique



1. Palm to palm.



2. Right palm over left back of hand and left palm over right back of hand.



3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clapsed in left palm and vice versa.



6. Rotational rubbing backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.

Reference: Hand washing technique (Alliffe et al 1978; Lawrence 1985)

People should use the 20-20 rule – wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm soapy water and dry thoroughly with clean towels or paper towels for another 20 seconds.

**For more information today, please contact: Otago District Health Board Communications Officer Gail Goodger on 0275 678281.**

**If we need to issue a media statement at the weekend, it will be provided by Michele Poole 021 784 964. Please note she is on-call only.**