



Otago
District Health Board
Pōari Hauora-ā-rohe ki Ōtāgo



Southland District
HEALTH BOARD
Te Pōari Hauora o te Rohe o Murihiku

Influenza A (H1N1)

Media Update No 13

June 12

Note: We will be holding a media tele-conference at 3.30pm today with Otago and Southland Medical Officer of Health Dr Marion Poore. Please phone 083033 and then pin number 395830#.

While the World Health Organisation has declared Influenza A (H1N1) a global pandemic, this will not significantly change the way we are responding nationally and in Otago and Southland.

"We will be on higher alert, however it does not mean anything about the severity of the illness of this strain of influenza, said Otago and Southland Medical Officer of Health Dr Marion Poore. "Rather it relates to how quickly and how wide the virus is spreading globally," she said.

"We have been expecting the situation to be upgraded to a pandemic for some time and have been planning and acting accordingly."

"We will continue to place our emphasis on managing all suspected cases in the community, as well as meeting all international flights in Dunedin and Queenstown to monitor passengers and support border agencies, as evidence indicates these current strategies are effective."

Public Health South is currently managing 13 suspected cases of Influenza A (H1N1) with tamiflu and isolation. There have been no confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) in Otago and Southland to date.

Dr Poore said while the risk of community transmission (from person to person) is growing, there is still no evidence this is happening in New Zealand.

Signs and symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also experience diarrhoea and vomiting. Hand hygiene is still the single most effective measure in protecting yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly.

People should also practise good cough and sneeze etiquette. This means covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of the tissue in a lined rubbish bin with a lid or plastic bag.

Sick people should stay home until they are well, rather than going to school or work. Try to avoid contact with sick people and reduce time spent in crowded settings. If you become sick, stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep you from infecting others.

The Ministry of Health advice is that people who have travelled overseas but who are well on their return or arrival do not need to be routinely excluded from school or work on their return. .

To protect yourself and others

Anyone who has recently travelled overseas and is ill with influenza symptoms is advised to phone their GP or Healthline (0800 611 116) for medical advice. Do not turn up at a hospital or medical centre before doing this as you can spread germs to other people.

For National Information contact Peter Abernethy, Moh Media Relations Manager on (04) 816 3660 or (021) 243 6805

For local information contact SDHB Communications Officer Jo Harvey on 027 674 1758.