

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) 09

Media Update #17

1 July 2009 at 14.00 hrs

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) 09 (Swine Flu) has now been confirmed in both Otago and Southland.

Medical Officer of Health Dr Marion Poore said that two cases have now been confirmed in adults from Invercargill.

There are now five confirmed cases of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) 09 in Otago-Southland. All cases are being treated at home and are recovering well.

Public Health South will continue to monitor levels of illness in the community. Other cases of influenza will occur around the region over the next few weeks and there will be a spectrum of illness from mild to severe. Dr Poore said that the basic message remains the same. "If people are sick they should stay at home. This will help to limit the spread of illness. Other family members can continue their regular activities unless they are also unwell."

At this stage general practices are managing the workload and there is no need to activate Community Based Assessment Centres in Otago and Southland. "Most people with influenza recover completely without needing to see a doctor, however people should not hesitate to seek medical advice if they have a chronic illness, or if they are getting sicker" said Dr Poore.

The best way of limiting the spread of both seasonal influenza and Swine Flu include:

- Staying home if you are sick
- Using tissues to cover coughs and sneezes, and disposing of used tissues in plastic bags
- Washing hands scrupulously using soap and water or hand sanitizer
- Staying at least 1 metre away from other people in social situations
- Minimising social contact such as shaking hands, hugging etc

Most people will recover at home without the need for medical treatment. Those suffering from influenza should stay at home until they are totally free of symptoms including sneezing and coughing. Your GP remains your first point of contact if you become sick and need to seek help.

Phone the national toll-free Healthline (0800 611 116) or your healthcare provider for health advice. Things to watch out for are:

- if you've been unwell for three or four days and are not getting any better or are feeling worse
- a high temperature (above 38.3C) that is not responding to attempts to reduce it
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- if you cough up bloody or green phlegm
- blue skin around the lips and/or blue skin on fingertips

- severe pain in the ear(s)
- severe vomiting
- difficulty waking up or feeling disoriented or confused
- fits or uncontrolled shaking
- if you started to feel better but then get a high fever and start to feel unwell again
- inability to keep fluids down
- other signs of becoming more sick such as children becoming more irritable and not eating and drinking.

For the latest information on Swine Flu, visit www.moh.govt.nz

For information on preparing for emergencies, including managing extended periods at home, see www.getthru.govt.nz

ENDS

For more information contact Jo Harvey, SDHB Communications Officer on 03 21 47243 or 027 674 1758.