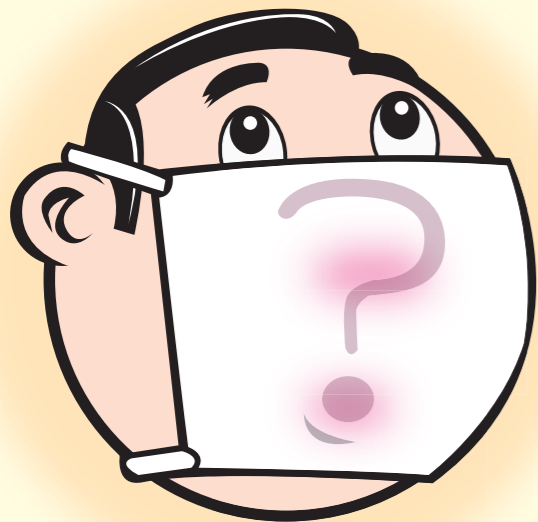


Influenza A H1N1

What You Need To Know

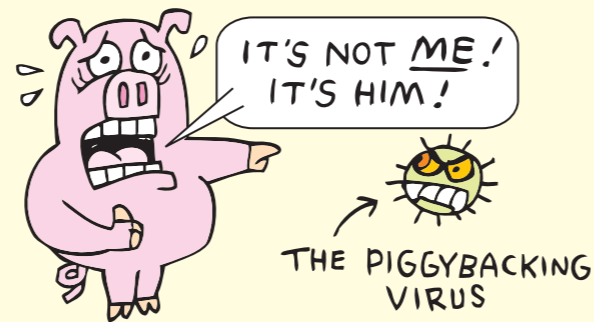


993
Special ambulance service
1800-333-9999
Influenza A (H1N1) Hotline

FACTS ABOUT INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

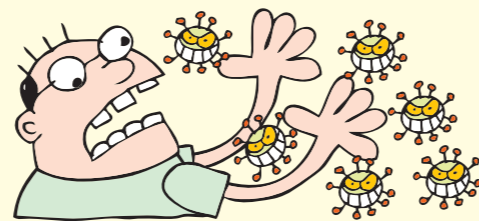
What is Influenza A (H1N1)?

Influenza A (H1N1) is a new strain of influenza virus that spreads from human to human and could spread quickly worldwide - leading to a pandemic flu outbreak. The disease was known as Swine Flu because it has some elements of a virus found in pigs. But the World Health Organization (WHO) now refers to it as Influenza A (H1N1).



How do humans get infected?

Like other flu viruses, the Influenza A (H1N1) virus is spread mainly through people with flu, coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



What are the symptoms of Influenza A (H1N1) in humans?

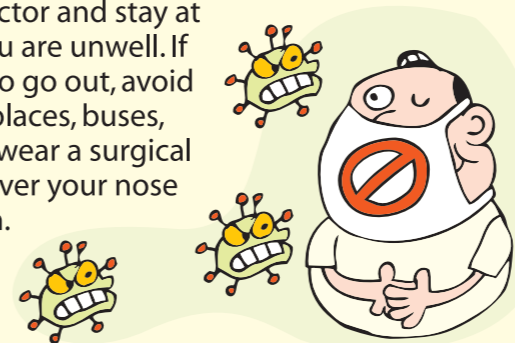
Like the regular human flu, common symptoms are high fever, with cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache and tiredness.

What steps can I take to minimise the risk of infection?

- Avoid contact with persons with symptoms of flu.



- See a doctor and stay at home if you are unwell. If you need to go out, avoid crowded places, buses, trains and wear a surgical mask to cover your nose and mouth.



- Observe good personal and environmental hygiene. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water frequently and after coughing or sneezing.



- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.



- Maintain good body resistance through a balanced diet, regular exercise, getting adequate rest, reducing stress and not smoking.



FACTS AND FICTION

Should I vaccinate myself against Influenza A (H1N1) with Tamiflu?

No. There is currently no vaccine available against Influenza A (H1N1). Tamiflu is not a vaccine.

Can I get Influenza A (H1N1) from consuming pork or pork-related food products?

No. There is no evidence to suggest that Influenza A (H1N1) can be transmitted to humans through the consumption of pork or pork-related products that are well cooked.

Is Influenza A (H1N1) confined only to Mexico and Mexicans?

No. The disease is believed to have first emerged in Mexico. However there is evidence to suggest that human to human transmission can occur the same way seasonal flu is spread. So the disease is not confined to Mexicans and can infect anyone.

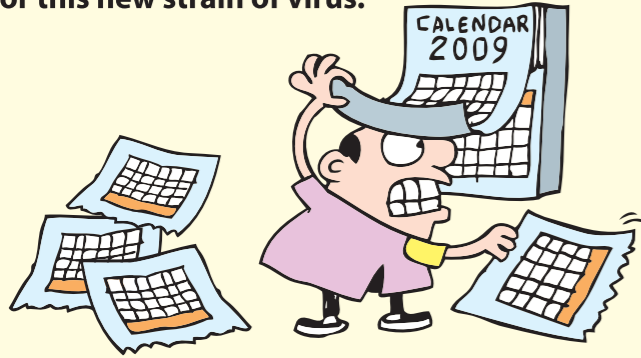
If there is no vaccine against Influenza A (H1N1), is a flu jab necessary if I am travelling overseas?

Yearly vaccination is recommended for groups at higher risk of complications of influenza, such as

- Persons aged 65 years and older;
- Children who are 6 months to 5 years;
- Adults and children who have chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, or kidney failure on dialysis.
- Women in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.

Additionally, influenza vaccination is recommended for healthy household contacts, caregivers and healthcare workers in contact with persons identified above.

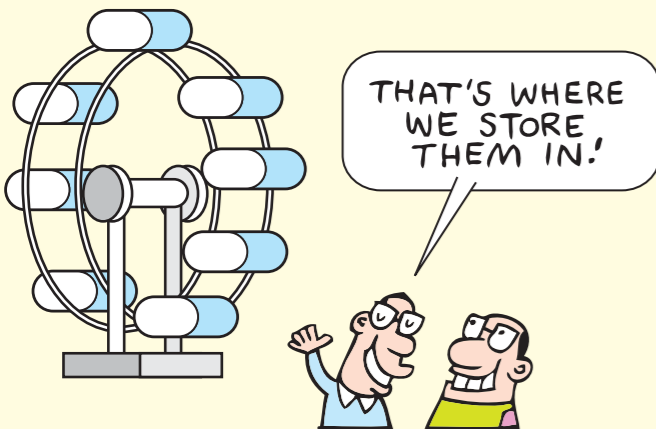
There is no vaccine available for this new strain of Influenza A (H1N1). It will take 4 to 6 months for vaccine manufacturers to produce a vaccine for this new strain of virus.



Is there any way to treat Influenza A (H1N1)?

Antiviral drugs such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza) have been recommended for the treatment of Influenza A (H1N1). Influenza antiviral drugs work best when started soon after illness is detected (within two 2 days), but treatment would still be considered after 48 hours of the onset of symptoms in some cases.

Your doctor is the best person to advise you on flu treatment. The Government maintains an adequate stockpile of antiviral drugs.



THE SITUATION IN SINGAPORE

Should I be alarmed?

There are currently no known cases of Influenza A (H1N1) in Singapore. The Government is monitoring the situation closely and will keep the public informed of changes. Whilst there is no cause for alarm, everyone should be vigilant and socially responsible by adopting simple precautions on good personal hygiene – washing hands thoroughly, wearing masks and seeing a doctor when you fall ill.



What is the Government doing to prevent Influenza A (H1N1) from entering Singapore?

The Government has responded swiftly with a series of measures. These include:

- Use of thermal scanners at air, land and sea checkpoints.
- People with fever will be referred for further checks.
- Putting on alert all medical practitioners and healthcare institutions in Singapore to be vigilant for any suspect cases of Influenza A (H1N1).
- Temperature checks in schools.

While temperature checks may not be foolproof, it enables us to take precautionary measures and reduce the risk to Singapore. In the event that a pandemic develops, the Government has a flu pandemic preparedness plan that can be put into action quickly.

GOING OVERSEAS

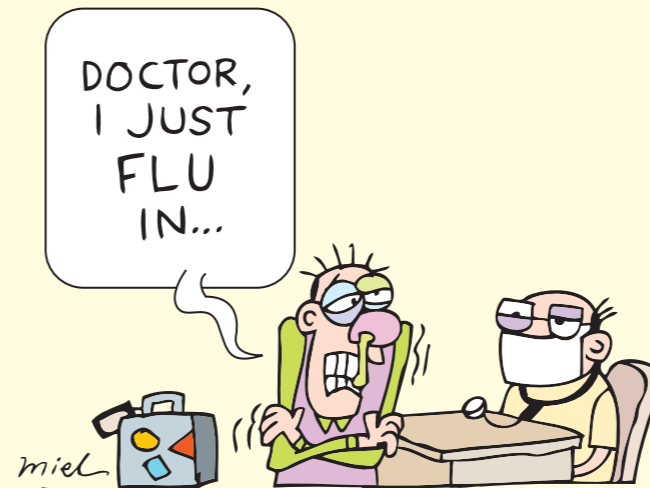
Is it safe to visit countries with cases of Influenza A (H1N1)?

You are strongly advised to postpone or avoid non-essential travel to Mexico and affected areas. If travel to such areas is unavoidable, please take precautionary measures and maintain good hygiene practices.

Travellers who have been in Mexico in the last seven days will be quarantined for up to seven days on their return to Singapore. Those who develop symptoms will be referred to the Communicable Disease Centre for assessment via a dedicated ambulance service (tel 993) which will convey such patients to Tan Tock Seng Hospital Emergency Department.

What should I do if I suspect I have Influenza A (H1N1) after returning to Singapore?

You should consult your doctor as soon as possible and inform him if you have recently travelled to areas which have cases of Influenza A (H1N1).



Alert. Informed. Prepared.

Influenza, or the regular human flu, causes 1 to 2 deaths in Singapore every year, and is indirectly associated with about 600 deaths a year. Historically, influenza pandemics tend to move around the globe in waves. The 1918 pandemic began as a mild wave and then returned as a far more deadly one. The pandemic of 1957 began with a mild phase followed, in several countries, by a second wave with higher fatalities. The pandemic of 1968 remained, in most countries, comparatively mild in both its first and second waves.

Influenza A (H1N1) is a new strain. It is too early to predict how it will act and if or when another wave might hit us. It is important therefore to be prepared, by keeping up a high standard of public and personal hygiene, through the simple act of regular handwashing with soap and water and being socially responsible. This will help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses in the community.

Be on guard but otherwise, get on with life, go outdoors, exercise.

Correct as of 7 May 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit

- www.flu.gov.sg
- www.moh.gov.sg
- www.ava.gov.sg