



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE
MH 34:85

28 April 2009

All Registered Medical Practitioners
All Licensees of Healthcare Establishments

MOH CIRCULAR 19/2009
ALERT: SWINE INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

WHO after its Emergency Meeting of 27 April 2009, has announced that it is upgrading its Pandemic Alert Phase from Phase 3 to Phase 4. This signals that sustained human-to-human transmission of a novel influenza virus has been verified. WHO emphasized that the change to a higher phase of pandemic alert indicates that the likelihood of a pandemic has increased but not that a pandemic is inevitable.

2 After a review of the latest outbreak situation involving swine influenza, MOH has also decided to upgrade our DORSCON Alert status from GREEN to YELLOW.

REQUIRED ACTION

3 Under DORSCON YELLOW, staff working in high-risk areas which include triage stations, emergency departments, intensive care units and isolation areas/rooms are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment when managing patients.

4 Clinicians should observe strict infection control precautions when handling patients:

- a) Presenting with influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, rhinorrhoea); AND
- b) Have a history of travel to affected areas (i.e. Mexico, and the states of California, Texas, Kansas and New York in the United States) in the 7 days prior to the onset of symptoms; OR have been in contact with ill persons who had a history of travel to these areas in the 7 days prior to the onset of symptoms.

5 Any patient who meets the case definition in Paragraph 4 should be referred immediately to the Emergency Medicine Department at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Medical practitioners should arrange for these patients to be transferred



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by ambulance by calling the dedicated ambulance service at 65860237 (available 24 hours).

6 The Ministry of Health should also be **notified immediately** of suspected cases. Please contact the Communicable Diseases Division at 98171463 (available 24 hours). MOH will inform the notifying doctor of the need for contact tracing and prophylaxis for close contacts of the case once the diagnosis has been established.

ADVICE TO PATIENTS

7 Physicians should advise family members and other close contacts of suspected cases to be vigilant for early symptoms of influenza, and to seek medical advice as early as possible if unwell.

FURTHER INFORMATION

8 For updates on this evolving situation, please refer to the MOH website www.moh.gov.sg

9 For further clarifications of this circular, please email moh_info@moh.gov.sg.

10 If you are a licensee of a healthcare establishment, please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of the relevant healthcare professionals in your establishment.



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