

30 April 2009

All Registered Medical Practitioners
All Licensees of Healthcare Establishments

MOH CIRCULAR 32/2009
ALERT: SWINE INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has raised its Pandemic Alert Phase from Phase 4 to Phase 5 on 30 April 2009. This elevation to Phase 5 is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. The declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent though not inevitable. WHO has recommended countries to take steps to heighten surveillance, adopt measures for early detection and treatment of cases and step up infection control in all health facilities.

2 As of 30th April 2009, there are no human cases of swine influenza in Singapore. However in line with WHO's elevation of the Pandemic Alert Phase to Phase 5, Singapore will be upgrading our DORSCON Alert status from YELLOW to ORANGE.

REQUIRED ACTION

3 Under DORSCON ORANGE, staff working in all clinical care areas are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment when managing patients.

4 Clinicians should observe strict infection control precautions when handling patients who meet case definitions as follows:

Case definitions

- a. A suspected case of Swine Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as an individual with an acute febrile respiratory illness (fever $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$)¹ with onset of symptoms:
- Within 7 days of travel history to affected areas², or;
 - Within 7 days of close contact with a person who is a probable case or a confirmed case of Swine Influenza A (H1N1).
- b. A probable case is defined as
- (i) an individual with an acute febrile respiratory illness (fever $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$) with an influenza test that is positive for Influenza A but is **un-subtypeable** by reagents used to detect seasonal influenza virus, **OR**;

¹ Persons who may not manifest fever include those on dialysis or immunosuppressive medications.

² Please refer to MOH website for the latest list of affected areas: <http://www.moh.gov.sg>

- (ii) an individual with a clinically compatible illness or who died of an unexplained acute respiratory illness who is considered to be epidemiologically linked to a probable or a confirmed case.
- c. A confirmed case is defined as an individual with laboratory confirmed Swine Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection by one or more of the following tests:
- Real-time RT-PCR;
 - Viral culture;
 - Four-fold rise in Swine Influenza A (H1N1) virus specific neutralizing antibodies.

5 Primary care physicians who encounter patients who meet the case definitions in Paragraph 4(a) and 4(b)(ii) should immediately refer the patients to the Emergency Medicine Department at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Primary care physicians should arrange for these patients to be transferred by ambulance by calling the dedicated ambulance service at 993 or 65860237 (available 24 hours).

6 The Ministry of Health should also be **notified immediately** of 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

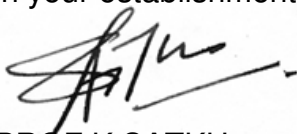
7 Physicians should advise family members and other close contacts of suspected cases to be vigilant for early symptoms of influenza, and to seek medical advice as early as possible if unwell.

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. A summary of useful communication channels and useful telephone numbers is attached as Annex A for easy reference.

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.



PROF K SATKU
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES

Summary of information channels & useful contact numbers

MOH Information platform and useful contact numbers	
Mode	Remarks
MOH website: www.moh.gov.sg	Updated information for all
Health Professional Portal (HPP): www.hpp.moh.gov.sg	Professional circulars and directives for healthcare professionals. To subscribe and update contact details for MedAlert**
SMA website: www.sma.org.sg	For information on Pandemic Flu Guide for clinics
Email: MOH_conversations@moh.gov.sg	For general feedback from GPs
Hotline for Communicable Disease Division, MOH: 98171463	For immediate notification of suspected case of Swine Influenza
Dedicated Ambulance Service (24hrs): 993 or 65860237	Transfer of suspected patients to Emergency Department, Tan Tock Seng Hospital
MOH Hospital Services moh_hospital_services@moh.gov.sg or 91296367 or 91788487 (24 hours)	For general feedback and queries from healthcare professionals in hospitals
MOH Hotline: 1800-225-4122	For general enquiry

** *Instructions for updating profile and contacts details for MedAlert:

1. Go to http://www.hpp.moh.gov.sg/HPP/DOCTORS_Home.html
 2. Click on the LOGIN button on the left side of the screen
 3. Log in using your SMC password or SINGPASS
 4. On successful login, click "My Profile" on the top of the page
 5. Scroll down and update your email address and mobile number in the required fields
- Please contact our Administrator at 63259491 / 63252953 (email: moh_hpp_helpdesk@moh.gov.sg) if you encounter any difficulties in updating or receiving any MEDALERT from MOH.

Information platform and useful contact numbers		
CFPS	Website	www.cfps.org.sg
	Hotline	6221 8608 (Effective 5 May 2009. Operational Hrs: 8:30am - 6pm, Mon - Fri, Closed on PH).
	Email	gpflu@cfps.org.sg
SMA	Website	www.sma.org.sg
	Hotline	62231264 (Operational Hrs: 8:30am - 6pm, Mon - Fri, closed on PH)
	Email	swineflu@sma.org.sg
SHP HQ	Website	www.pccnetwork.com.sg
	Hotline	6377 7083
	Email	lee.kiat.chin@singhealth.com.sg
NHGP HQ	Website	http://www.nhgp.com.sg/
	Hotline	6355 3000
	Email	partners@nhg.com.sg