

25 June 2009

Dear Valued Clients

INFORMATION ALERT



WORLD – The World Health Organisation on Wednesday reported a huge leap in the H1N1-2009 flu pandemic toll to more than **55867** people infected and **238** dead.

The toll has risen by more than **3,707** cases and **7** deaths since Tuesday, highlighting the steady spread of the A (H1N1) virus. The confirmed cases of H1N1 have now been reported in 100 countries and territories. The Philippines has reported the first H1N1-2009 flu death in Asia, Iran joined the countries reporting their first cases, while Singapore quarantined a Hong Kong football team.

For further breakdown of the confirmed cases by country, please refer to the following website: [WHO H1N1 Flu updates](#)



SINGAPORE – The first case of community spread of Influenza A (H1N1) happened about 1 week ago. Over the weekend more cases have emerged and currently 4 community clusters have been identified, namely Riverlife Church, Butter Factory, Fishermen of Christ Church and Maju Camp.

As the Health Minister Mr Khaw Boon Wan put it in his press conference, “we have crossed the tipping point beyond which local transmissions will grow rapidly...”. From here onwards, it is no longer how we can contain the H1N1 virus but rather how we can mitigate its effect on the Singapore community.

As of 25 June 09, Singapore has confirmed another 26 new cases (195th to 220th cases) of Influenza A (H1N1), comprising 11 local cases and 15 cases with travel history. This brings the total number of confirmed cases in Singapore to 220.

With the growing number of cases, the polyclinics and a few hundred GPs are being prepared to treat suspect Influenza A (H1N1) cases. These clinics or Pandemic Preparedness Clinics (PPC) will help to manage patients with influenza-like illness when we move from containment into mitigation mode.

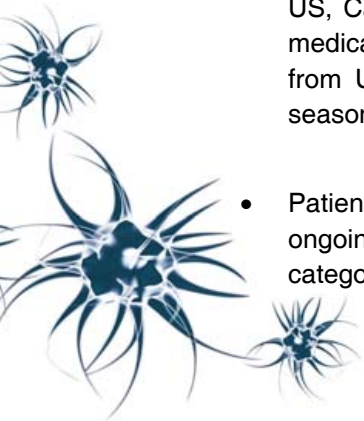
We are pleased to share with you some information on the H1N1-2009 virus and general advice on the coming mitigation phase in our fight against the H1N1 virus.

Warmest Regards,

Dr Chng Shih Kiat
Deputy Medical Director
Raffles Medical Group

What do we know of this virus thus far?

- The H1N1 virus produces a spectrum of disease ranging from mild to severe illness and death. The current estimated case fatality rate of H1N1 is estimated between 0.16 to 2%. This is slightly higher than the 0.1% case fatality rate of the seasonal flu. What is more alarming is that the current H1N1 has caused the death of 5 pregnant women worldwide which is not common for influenza infection.
- The virus produces influenza-like illness with symptoms of fever, body aching, headache, coughing, sore throat etc. Some may present with diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms.
- 5 to 7% of patients with H1N1 infection require hospitalization (from statistics coming from US, Canada and Mexico). And majority of these (about 70%) are patients with pre-existing medical conditions. The profile of hospitalised patients also tends to be younger (median age from US and Canada range from 17 yrs old to 27.5 yrs old). This also differs from the seasonal flu, where most hospitalized patients are elderly.
- Patients with history of asthma or chronic lung diseases, heart diseases, immunosuppression, ongoing chemotherapy, ongoing kidney dialysis and current pregnancy belong to the high-risk category that are likely to be hospitalised for more serious complications when infected.



What can we do in the coming mitigation phase in our fight against H1N1?

The Ministry of Health has already put in place several measures and these are: -

- Setting up of Pandemic Preparedness Clinics (PPC) where GPs and polyclinics will begin to see and treat any patients with influenza like illness. Only serious complicated cases will be referred to the hospital for treatment.
- Complicated cases will no longer be admitted only to CDC (TTSH) and KKH, but all restructured hospitals will be capable to test and manage H1N1 infected patients.
- Working with manufacturers of H1N1 vaccines to secure adequate vaccines for Singaporeans. However clinical trials may take months to complete and hence delay early availability of the new vaccines.



- The PPCs will be identified with a “H1N1-ready” decal (see Annex A). They are located island-wide to ensure that Singaporeans can get medical assessment and treatment for influenza-like illness promptly. To locate the nearest PPC, the public can go to HPB website ([Location of PPC Clinics](#)) or MOH website (www.moh.gov.sg).



All RMG GP clinics are registered under MOH's influenza Pandemic Response Framework. ([RMG Clinic Listing](#))

Keeping the H1N1 virus from the Office

The most important defense that we have against the H1N1 virus is personal and environmental hygiene, social distancing and being socially responsible.

Preventive measure at workplace is one of the areas to look at in order to minimise the risk of community transmission of the H1N1 virus. For example, employees who frequently travel outside of Singapore are at a higher risk. Hence, besides having corporate business continuity plans, you might like to ensure that employees who have travelled overseas are free of the influenza virus before returning back to your office premises.



Returning From an Overseas Trip

The “Rapid Test for Influenza A virus” can be administered on any employees returning from an overseas trip. Some companies have made it compulsory for their employees to take this test if they were to return from an overseas leisure trip or official ones.

The Raffles Integrated Influenza Screening, an end-to-end integrated product has been specially prepared for our corporate clients and their employees before they embark on their trips and when they return to Singapore. For more details, please contact our Corporate Services Team or Account Managers for assistance.

H1N1 is here to stay for some time. We will have to learn to live with it and carry on with our day-to-day activities with precautionary measures and personal responsibility. Hopefully, companies and staff can emerge better equipped and prepared for this challenge.