

# H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)

## Information for the general public

26 May 2009

### Introduction

Cases of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) virus have been identified in countries across the world, including Australia.

Victoria has had confirmed cases of Human Swine Influenza since 20 May 2009.

### The illness

#### What is H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)?

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) is caused by a new influenza virus.

#### What are the signs and symptoms?

The symptoms of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also had diarrhoea and vomiting.

#### How does H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) spread?

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) virus is contagious and is spreading the same way seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing.

Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

#### How long can an infected person spread H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) to others?

People with H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza) virus may be contagious for up to seven days following onset of illness.

Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Washing your hands frequently will reduce the chance of contamination from common surfaces.

#### How long can the virus live outside the body?

The virus may survive on hard surfaces for 1-2 days, particularly in cold or low humidity conditions.

The use of normal household detergents will remove the virus.

### How should I protect myself?

Good health hygiene can reduce the chance you will get the flu or pass it on to others.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

If you have the flu, you should avoid public places and close contact with others, especially children.

### What to do if I have flu-like symptoms

If you are feeling unwell with a fever and a cough or cold symptoms, you should see your doctor for advice. It is recommended that you telephone first and alert clinic staff of your arrival so the proper arrangements can be made.

### Treatment and help is available

#### Are there medicines to treat H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu)?

If you get sick, antiviral medicines can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

Treatment with antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within two days of symptoms appearing).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)  
Call the Swine Influenza Hotline Tel 180 2007

Call Nurse-on-Call Tel. 1300 606 024 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)