



THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk still free of Human Swine Influenza - but continue to take precautions!

The Norfolk Island Government Swine Influenza Task Force continues to monitor the situation regarding Human Swine 'Flu (Influenza A H1N1). To date, there have been no cases of the Swine 'Flu identified in Norfolk Island, and the precautions in place since the end of April 2009 will remain in force.

The Task Force is aware that there are only two avenues for persons to enter Norfolk Island – by air or by sea. Consequently, existing measures will continue for advising incoming passengers on what action to take if they exhibit flu-like symptoms, requiring the reporting of such passengers by incoming airline or ship operators and maintaining the agreed protocols for treatment and quarantine of persons with suspected or confirmed Human Swine Influenza.

Everyone in the community is advised to remain alert to the symptoms of this type of influenza, which are similar to those of the regular 'flu including fever, cough, sore throat, aching body, headache, chills, fatigue, diarrhoea and vomiting. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should contact the Norfolk Island Hospital **by telephone** on 22091 in the first instance for further advice. Appointments will be arranged for anyone requiring further assessment or treatment. After assessment by a medical officer, antiviral treatments will be provided on prescription only where required. People with flu-like symptoms, especially fever and aching limbs, are requested to telephone first and **not to go straight to the hospital** as this could spread the infection to other persons.

The Task Force also repeated the information given previously on good personal hygiene measures to protect individuals from any form of influenza, including "swine 'flu".

1. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough

The 'flu virus can travel through the air when a person coughs or sneezes. When you cough or sneeze you should:

- turn away from other people;
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve;
- use disposable tissues rather than a handkerchief (which could store the virus);
- put used tissues into the nearest bin, rather than a pocket or handbag; and
- wash your hands, or use an alcohol hand rub, as soon as possible afterwards.

2. Wash your hands

Washing your hands regularly - even when they aren't visibly dirty - with soap and water, or

with an alcohol-based product that does not require water, is effective in killing the 'flu virus. A variety of alcohol-based gels, rinses or foams are available at local supermarkets and pharmacies. Always wash your hands:

- after you've been to the toilet;
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose;
- after being in contact with someone who has a cold or 'flu;
- before touching your eyes, nose or mouth; and
- before preparing food and eating.

3. Don't share personal items

The 'flu virus can spread when someone touches an object which has the virus on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. If a person in your household has the 'flu:

- keep personal items, such as towels, bedding and toothbrushes separate; and
- do not share eating and drinking utensils, food or drinks.

4. Clean surfaces

Influenza viruses can live on surfaces for several hours. If someone in your house has the 'flu, regularly clean surfaces such as tables, benches, fridge doors and doorknobs with soap and water or detergent.

5. Avoid close contact with others if you are unwell with 'flu

Keeping your distance by standing or sitting back at least one metre from other people will help reduce the chances of spreading the 'flu virus.

While you are unwell you should not go to work or school or attend other public or crowded gatherings. Preferably, you should remain at home. If you must go out of your home, try to wear a mask to contain the virus. Do not visit people who have the 'flu unless it is absolutely necessary.

Further information on the Human Swine Flu is available on the Australian Government's national influenza hotline on ph 08- 84028833 which Norfolk Island residents can call free of charge, with regular information updates and reports available from the national health emergency website at www.healthemergency.gov.au.

8 July 2009