

2009 H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu) Hygiene, health and wellbeing update

Issued 25 June 2009

This notice is provided to early childhood education and care providers to update the process for dealing with H1N1.

- Victoria has moved to the 'Protect' phase of the national pandemic plan.
- This illness is classified as 'moderate', with the majority of cases being mild. However five per cent of cases are severe, which means that those affected may require hospitalisation and intensive care.
- The best defence against all influenza viruses – including H1N1 – remains good general hygiene.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Department (DEECD) no longer provides you with information on individual confirmed cases of the virus.
- **If your facility has a baby's room**, you must notify the Department of Human Services (DHS) – tel: 1300 651 160 – of:
 - a. cases confirmed by laboratory testing for **all children under the age of 12 months**
 - b. **three or more cases confirmed within a 72 hour period at your facility** (irrespective of child age)
- All other enquiries should be directed to the DEECD Incident Coordination Centre – 1800 059 866 – Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm
- In general you are **not required** to provide notification to parents at your facility of confirmed cases. Notifying parents with vulnerable children (those with chronic illness or disability) should be considered.
- On advice from a doctor, quarantine will be limited to confirmed cases of the virus. These people and their contacts will not be given antiviral therapy unless it is clinically indicated.
- You must contact the parent of a child who is unwell with flu-like symptoms and make arrangements for the child to be collected as soon as possible. This particularly applies to children that may have special health care needs (including chronic respiratory conditions, compromised immune system, chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, and neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy and, spina bifida).
- Children becoming ill at your facility with flu-like symptoms should be removed from their room and cared for separately until they are collected by their parents. Staff should ensure that appropriate hygiene practices are taken when attending to these children and that infection control processes are in place.

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- Parents should be advised to seek medical advice if their child is unwell with flu-like symptoms, particularly if the child has special health needs.
- Children and staff with flu-like symptoms should stay at home and limit close contact with others, especially other children, and seek medical advice, where necessary.
- Children's facilities will not be partially or fully closed unless there are exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a facility-by-facility basis and will focus on facilities with children under the age of one year.
- Childcare/preschool coordinators must not quarantine children or partially or fully close their facilities without direction from DHS and DEECD.
- Children returning from travel to areas of high prevalence will no longer be asked to enter into voluntary quarantine after arrival back in Australia.

Peter Dawkins
Secretary

Dr Sharon Goldfeld
Principal Medical Advisor