

**H1N1 INFLUENZA 09: GENERAL PRACTITIONER UPDATE #10**

Friday 17 July 2009

Please distribute to all practice staff

**Key points**

1. **Treat** patients at risk of severe disease early
2. **Reorder** free anti-influenza medicines early
3. Routine influenza **testing is not required**
4. See our **website** for a range of resources, including order forms, fact sheets and videos

**Current situation**

H1N1 influenza 09 (human swine influenza) is circulating at high levels in many parts of NSW. Although the vast majority of patients will have a mild to moderate course, a minority will have severe disease. So far in NSW over 400 patients have been hospitalised, over 60 have required intensive care, and 10 have died. Patients admitted with H1N1 influenza 09 tend to be younger than those with seasonal influenza: 80% of patients requiring intensive care are aged 30-59 years. The majority of these patients have had risk factors for severe disease. Pregnant women in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimesters are at increased risk of severe disease and a small number have required intensive care.

**Early treatment of patients at risk of severe disease**

Please treat patients with influenza symptoms who are at risk of severe disease early (see: [http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/resources/pdf/gp\\_protect.pdf](http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/resources/pdf/gp_protect.pdf)). Patients are eligible for free treatment if they have an influenza-like illness and:

- are either moderately to severely ill, OR
- are at risk of severe disease because they are **pregnant**, of **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** background, or have an **underlying chronic medical condition**.

**Ordering anti-influenza medication**

Please order free anti-influenza medicines (oseltamivir and zanamivir) through the State Vaccine Centre. Re-order early to avoid delays, and include your treatment record form when you re-order (see: <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/professionals/index.asp>). Oseltamivir suspension is available from selected community pharmacies in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and from major hospital facilities in other areas.

**Testing is not required to treat patients and is not routinely recommended**

GPs are requested to only test for influenza in the unusual circumstance where the result will directly change a patient's clinical management. Testing is not required before commencing treatment in patients with suspected influenza.

**Need help?**

For a range of resources for GPs, pregnant and breast feeding women and others, see <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp>. Please call your local public health unit if you require further information or advice.

GPs continue to play a vital role in the H1N1 influenza 09 response, and I realise many of you have been extraordinarily busy. I sincerely thank you for your ongoing hard work.

Dr Kerry Chant

**Chief Health Officer and Deputy Director General – Population Health**

17 July 2009

**For more information, please call your local public health unit**

C'down/L'pool	02 9515 9420	Penrith	02 4734 2022	Broken Hill	08 8080 1499	Newcastle	02 4924 6477
Gosford	02 4349 4845	Randwick	02 9382 8333	Dubbo	02 6841 5569	Port Macquarie	02 6588 2750
Hornsby	02 9477 9400	Albury	02 6080 8900	Goulburn	02 4824 1837	Tamworth	02 6767 8630
Parramatta	02 9840 3603	Bathurst	02 6339 5601	Lismore	02 6620 7500	Wollongong	02 4221 6700

Please visit our website: <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp>

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