

Facts about and Steps to Prevent Influenza A (H1N1)

1. The transmission routes of influenza A (H1N1):

The transmission of the influenza A (H1N1) virus is similar to that of the seasonal influenza, which is spread primarily from person to person through droplets created when a person infected with the virus coughs or sneezes. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with influenza viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Adults with the illness can infect others from 1 day before the onset of symptoms to up to 7 days after the onset of symptoms. However, for patients with longer course of the disease, the spread of the virus is still possible during the illness course. Besides, the infectious period for infected children might be longer.

2. The symptoms of influenza A (H1N1):

The symptoms of influenza A (H1N1) in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of seasonal influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people with influenza A (H1N1) have also reported diarrhea or vomiting.

3. How to confirm you are infected with influenza A (H1N1):

To diagnose influenza A (H1N1) infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected for laboratory testing instead of judging from symptoms only. If you have travel history, contact history or related symptoms, please seek medical attention as soon as possible and inform the doctor of your travel/contact history.

4. Everyday steps to prevent influenza A (H1N1):

- (1). Stay away from the infection source: Avoid traveling to areas affected by the influenza A (H1N1) epidemic.
- (2). Practice good personal hygiene: Wash hands frequently and practice good hygiene habits.
- (3). Maintain personal health: Keep a balanced diet and maintain adequate exercise.

5. People with respiratory symptoms should maintain respiratory hygiene and keep coughing etiquette:

- (1). People should wear a mask when they develop respiratory symptoms such as coughing, and throw the mask into a trash can and change to a new one if it is contaminated with respiratory secretions.
- (2). Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or handkerchief when coughing or sneezing. If a tissue or handkerchief is not available, it is preferable to cover the nose and mouth with the upper sleeve. .
- (3). If you have respiratory symptoms, keep a talking distance of about 2m or more with others.
- (4). Whenever touching respiratory secretions, wash your hands thoroughly immediately.
- (5). Stay at home when sick and avoid going out unless when seeking medical attention.

6. If it is inevitable to travel to areas affected by the influenza A (H1N1) epidemic:

1. Please pay attention to the followings:

- (1). Avoid going to crowded places or visiting patients in hospitals.
- (2). Maintain good personal hygiene and wash hands frequently. When it is impossible to wash hands using soap and water, use alcohol-based (above 60%) hand cleaners to clean hands.
- (3). If you develop a fever or other symptoms similar to that of influenza A (H1N1) during your trip, wear a mask immediately and visit a doctor as soon as possible. If you are a member of a tour group, please inform the tour group leader for assistance to seek medical attention and notify the relevant government agency.

2. Returning from areas affected by the influenza A (H1N1) epidemic:

- (1). Should one experience symptoms during the trip, “The Communicable Disease Survey Form” should be filled out at the airport and seaport when returning to Taiwan, and the person with symptoms should voluntarily inform the quarantine personnel.
- (2). After returning from areas affected by the influenza A (H1N1) epidemic, please monitor your health status closely for 7 days by measuring your body temperature twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening, and watch out for the development of other symptoms..
- (3). If symptoms similar to that of influenza A (H1N1)

develop, wear a mask immediately to protect others and inform the local health unit for assistance to seek medical attention. You should inform your doctor the followings:1. your symptoms, 2.where you have traveled to, and 3. if you have had any close contact with suspected or confirmed case of influenza A (H1N1).