

7 May 2009

Dear Valued Clients

## INFORMATION ALERT



**WORLD** - 23 countries have officially reported 1893 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection. Mexico has reported 942 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 29 deaths. The United States has reported 642 laboratory confirmed human cases, including two deaths.

Sweden and Poland joined the list of affected countries. Sweden said a woman in her 50s who visited Chicago had tested positive for the H1N1 virus.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Austria (1), Canada (165), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (5), Germany (9), Guatemala (1), Ireland (1), Israel (4), Italy (5), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (5), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (2), Spain (73), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (28).

There has been an increase in the number of confirmed cases in Britain, Spain, Italy and Germany. If there is a sustained spread within Europe -- as there has been in North America -- this could trigger the official declaration of a pandemic by the U.N agency.



**SINGAPORE** –. Singapore will remain on “**Orange**” alert over the next 5 days, as **NO** confirmed cases have been reported. MOH announced the possibility of lowering to “**Yellow**”, a lower level but more sustainable level of flu precaution, to conserve the resources deployed. The situation will be closely monitored for any changes. However we should remain prepared to deal with the changing threat.

In today’s issue, we are sharing with you general information on influenza. Look out for practical tips to prevent the spread of influenza in tomorrow’s issue.

Should you require further information or clarifications, please contact our Corporate Services Team or Account Managers for assistance.

Warmest regards,

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Deputy Medical Director  
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## APPENDIX

### General Advice & Information on Influenza

#### What is influenza?

Influenza is a viral infection. There are a total of 3 main types of influenza virus: Influenza A, B and C. The current H1N1 and the avian flu are Type A Influenza viruses. Type A and B are common causes for seasonal human influenza epidemics.

Influenza virus is named according to the types of proteins they are made of, namely the H (haemagglutinins) and N (neuraminidase) proteins. There are a total of 16 H proteins and 9 of N proteins. The current flu virus causing an epidemic globally is typed as H1N1.

With the current situation of H1N1 flu, a patient is considered to have suspected H1N1 flu infection: -

- If the patient fulfills the criteria of flu symptoms with a positive history of travel to affected countries.
- If the person had been in contact others infected with pneumonia (lung infection) or other infected with flu.

Currently all patients with symptoms of flu, as stated above, should receive medical attention regardless of whether they have positive history of contact or travel.

#### How does influenza spread?

- The virus spreads via droplets through coughing, sneezing and inhalations of infectious droplets from a nearby person.
- The Influenza virus is also known to survive on hard, non-porous surface e.g. tables or doorknobs, for up to 2 days. Any contact with such surfaces and unknowingly using your contaminated hands to rub your eyes, nose or mouth may lead to an infection.
- An infected patient is infective one day before the onset of the symptoms and up to 5 to 7 days from the onset of symptoms. So an infected person can be passing his flu virus to another **before** he is sick and **while** he is sick.



## What are symptoms of influenza?

- An abrupt onset of high fever usually greater than 38 degree Celsius with chills accompanied with a dry cough.
- Other respiratory tract infection symptoms such as running nose, sore throat, sneezing may also be present.
- Body aches, headache, malaise and breathlessness.

## Does the influenza vaccination help?

Regular influenza vaccination is recommended to protect you against seasonal influenza. It does not protect against the current H1N1 flu virus, but if you come down with flu symptoms despite having had previous influenza vaccination, it will alert the doctor that you may be infected with a different influenza virus such as H1N1 or the avian flu virus.

