

30 April 2009

Dear Valued Clients

INFORMATION ALERT

WORLD- The WHO's Director-General Margaret Chan raised the current level of influenza pandemic alert from phase 4 to 5. According to the WHO, a phase 5 alert means there is sustained transmission among people in at least two countries. Death of a toddler in Texas, the first death outside Mexico, strengthened the belief that a global outbreak of the disease is imminent. In Asia, New Zealand is the only country in the region with confirmed cases, which takes the country's total probable and confirmed infections to 14.

SINGAPORE- As of today, we are still at ALERT YELLOW, which describes under the MOH's Disease Outbreak Response System, that "there is slight human-to-human transmission, and small risk of being imported here". There are currently 17 referred cases out of which 3 are undergoing tests. As of 30 April 2009, Health officials assured that there are no cases of Swine Flu on the island. Companies are however advised to implement and exercise readiness in educating environmental and personal hygiene, including our recommended infection control precautionary measures sent out to you in the earlier ISSUE 3, dated 29 April 2009.

INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

Though Singapore is currently at Alert Yellow, we would still like to prepare your companies to review and implement the following precautionary measures should Singapore raise the Alert to **Orange** in the next couple of days.

They are: -

1. Policy

- Review staff policies in line with latest MOH health advisory. Consider recalling of non-critical staff and families from affected countries and carry out voluntary home quarantine of those with recent travel history from affected countries.
- Implement daily temperature checks for the staff.
- Consider separation or mandatory sick leave for those with flu-like symptoms.

2. Response

- Implement temperature screening of visitors and recording of visitor details.
- Implement movement tracing of staff and visitors within the workplace/office to facilitate contact tracing.
- Activate contact tracing when needed.
- In-house phone surveillance to monitor staff on voluntary home quarantine or mandatory sick leave.
- Increase frequency of cleaning the office/common areas.
- Implement protocol for management of staff with flu-like symptoms or fever cases within the workplace or office.
- Identify rooms for isolation while waiting for evacuation.
- Identify staff that will be responsible to help in evacuating colleagues.

PATIENT ADVISORY: GETTING THE FAMILY PREPARED

1. Childcare

- Ensure childcare groups are kept small to reduce the risk of viral exposure. Ensure schools and childcare groups have adequate and easy access to hand cleansers and soaps for washing and cleaning of hands.
- Advise older children and teenagers not to congregate at public places that may expose them to the disease.
- Arrange with Family Doctors or Specialists for adequate supply of medications for the time being if parents have history of chronic diseases.
- Teach the children on maintenance of proper hygiene.
- Regular and proper hand washing. Proper hand washing requires the use of soap and water. Rinse hands under running water and dry them thoroughly.
- Teach children not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth without proper hand washing.
- Teach the children proper coughing etiquette, e.g. coughing into a tissue paper and disposing the tissue paper appropriately.
- Teach the children to wash their hands before meals, after using the toilet and after sneezing or coughing.
- Toys should be kept clean. To prevent transmission of any pathogens, it has been recommended that toys that were mouthed should routinely be cleaned and disinfected. Toys that were contaminated by body fluids, e.g. saliva or nasal discharge, should be cleaned and disinfected.
- Regular mopping and cleaning of living areas. Mops and equipment used should be soaked in disinfectant solution after use and rinsed thoroughly with water. The solution should then be promptly disposed of down a drainpipe. An appropriate disinfectant is the use of diluted household bleach.



1. Start by wetting your hands with soap & water. Palm to palm



2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa



7. Rotational rubbing of right wrist and vice versa. Rinse and dry thoroughly



Dry hands thoroughly by wiping from fingers to palm

Hand Washing Techniques

The objective is to remove any transient microorganisms which may have been acquired through patient contact or normal duties.

2. Family Members with Chronic Diseases

- Discuss with healthcare provider regarding care plans should there be a pandemic, e.g. how to obtain medication, what can one do regarding self monitoring of conditions, such as, blood glucose monitoring for diabetic patients.
- Discuss with healthcare provider regarding the feasibility of obtaining longer supply of medication, especially, if control of chronic disease is stable.
- Discuss with healthcare provider regarding the possibility of health consult via phone or email for stable chronic diseases to minimise visits to the clinic.



3. General

- Stockpiling of essential items such as food, baby milk powder and medicine for 2 weeks or more.
- Minimise outings to crowded and enclosed public places such as cinemas.
- Do not throw leftover food on the floor or in the open.
- Do not leave food in common areas for stray animals.
- Do not spit on the floor and common areas.
- Throw used masks, tissue or litter into rubbish bins.
- Use a serving spoon when sharing food from a common dish.
- Do not share personal items such as toothbrushes and towels.
- Institute self home quarantine if you should fall sick and minimize contact with other family members, e.g. sleeping and having meals separately

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

Warmest regards,
Raffles Medical Group