

2 May 2009

Dear Valued Clients

INFORMATION ALERT

WORLD- The WHO is now officially referring the Swine Flu virus as **Influenza A (H1N1)**, in part because the virus is not spread by contact with pigs but is transmitted from person to person. Mexico has started its "5-day shut down" to halt the spread of the Influenza A as more countries are confirming new cases worldwide, with the first confirmed cases of infection recorded in Denmark, Hong Kong and South Korea.

WHO Phase of Pandemic Alert status is currently at **LEVEL 5**: "Phase 5 is characterised by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalise the organisation, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short."

SINGAPORE- There are a total of 25 cases investigated thus far, out of which, 21 cases have tested negative for Influenza A, 3 tested positive for the usual circulating seasonal strains of Influenza A, and 1 is pending laboratory investigations.

Singapore's Disease Outbreak Response System Alert status is currently at **ORANGE**: "Virus becoming increasingly better adapted to humans but may not yet be fully transmissible, requiring close contact with an index case. Larger clusters appear in one or two places outside Singapore but a pandemic has not yet been declared".

New Travel and Health Advisory

You should avoid non-essential travels to **affected areas**. These include Mexico, United States (namely New York, California, Texas and Kansas) and Canada (Nova Scotia).

You should also be aware that confirmed cases are noted in Germany (3 cases), United Kingdom (8 cases), Spain (13 cases), New Zealand (3 cases), Israel (2 cases), Netherlands (1 case), Switzerland (1 case), Austria (1 case), Denmark (1 case), Hong Kong (1 case) and South Korea (1 case). Travelling to these countries should also be avoided.



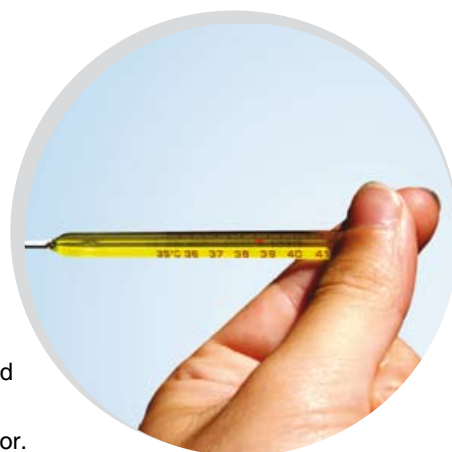
With Singapore at ALERT level - Orange, the following measures have been put in place:

Home Quarantine Order and Phone Surveillance

- Those with a travel history to Mexico over the past seven days will be quarantined for seven days when they enter Singapore and will undergo phone surveillance for symptoms of A Influenza virus.
- Those who developed symptoms will be referred to Communicable Disease Centre for a thorough assessment. A dedicated ambulance service (telephone no. 993) should be activated for suspected cases.
- Should evidence arise that other countries besides Mexico are exporting Influenza A virus, Ministry of Health will consider imposing similar conditions on travellers returning from these areas.

Voluntary Self-Monitoring at Home

- If you are returning from other affected areas other than Mexico as listed above, you are advised to stay at home for 7 days upon returning and check for flu symptoms.
- You should practice social distancing and refrain from joining mass gatherings such as going to cinemas, visiting the spas or gyms, shopping malls, supermarkets or hawker centres etc.
- If you develop fever > 38 degree Celsius with coughing, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing within 7 days after returning, you should put on a surgical mask and call 993 for an ambulance.
- Upon seeing the doctor, you must disclose your detailed travel history to the doctor.



If you have to travel to the affected areas

1. Avoid contact with persons having symptoms of influenza or pneumonia.
2. Avoid crowded areas and areas with poor ventilation.
3. Observe good personal and environmental hygiene. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, especially when they are contaminated with respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing.
4. Wash hands before and after meals, after using the toilets and whenever you think you may have contacted or touched areas that might be contaminated such as public eating areas.
5. Avoid using unwashed bare hands to rub eyes, mouth and nose.
6. Maintain good body resistance through a balanced diet, regular exercises, having adequate rest, reducing stress and refrain from smoking.
7. Eat well-cooked dishes.
8. Avoid pig rearing areas, pig farms and butchering sites.
9. Adopt proper hand washing practice after handling pets and animals.
10. Be updated with the seasonal flu vaccination.



11. Consult a doctor if you develop flu symptoms i.e. onset of high fever > 38 degree Celsius with presence of coughing, sore throat or runny nose. You should highlight to the doctor any possible contacts that you might have such as;
 - a. Travelling to US, Mexico and Canada.
 - b. In contact with patients with flu or pneumonia.
 - c. In contact with live animals such as pigs in affected areas.
12. Upon returning from affected areas with influenza cases, you should consider self impose home quarantine for 7 days and report to a doctor if you develop any flu symptoms or fever.



Should you require any further information or clarification, please contact our Corporate Services team or account managers for assistance.

Warmest regards,

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