

6 May 2009

Dear Valued Clients

INFORMATION ALERT



WORLD – 21 countries have officially reported 1490 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection. Mexico has reported 822 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 29 deaths. The United States has reported over 403 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 2 deaths. The latest reported death is the first U.S resident.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Austria (1), Canada (140), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (4), Germany (9), Ireland (1), Israel (4), Italy (5), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (6), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (2), Spain (57), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (27).

Asia's first person-to-person Influenza A (H1N1) infection case was confirmed on Tuesday by officials in South Korea, who said a nun had caught the disease from her colleague.

WHO advises all to maintain the alert and strengthen surveillance. Health experts warned a risk of a second wave of virus spread if the Influenza A (H1N1) virus mixes with the normal seasonal flu.



SINGAPORE – As of 6 May 2009, there is **NO** confirmed case reported. Out of the 29 cases investigated, 24 were declared free from the Influenza A (H1N1), 4 cases reported were found suffering from the normal seasonal human flu and 1 is pending investigation.

Since the Home Quarantine Order (HQO) came into effect on the 4 May 2009, there have been a total of 8 HQOs issued, 2 are foreign residents and 6 Singaporeans who have all travelled to Mexico.

The HQO is issued by the MOH, under the Infectious Diseases Act to contacts and suspected contacts of the Influenza A (H1N1-2009) virus, with the aim limiting the spread of the Influenza A (H1N1) in the community. You can refer to the following appendix for a list of FAQ on the HQO.

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

Warmest regards,

Dr Chng Shih Kiat
Deputy Medical Director
Raffles Medical Group

APPENDIX

FAQs on Home Quarantine Order (HQO)

What is the HQO?

The HQO is a measure to contain the spread of diseases such as SARS and the current H1N1 influenza A. HQO allows for a break in the chain of transmission and control the spread of an infectious disease.

Persons under HQOs are **NOT** necessarily infectious. However, those who have been in close contact with a patient with highly transmissible infectious disease are at risk of becoming ill with the disease. Therefore, isolation from the public through HQO is to minimise the risk of spreading the infectious disease to others.

Regular phone surveillance and online monitoring via the web cam by officers designated by the Ministry are conducted several times a day. If the person under HQO develops a fever, an ambulance will be dispatched to provide medical evacuation to Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) for treatment, if necessary.

Where will you be quarantined?

If you are unable to be quarantined at your own residential homes, or you are without a residential home in Singapore, alternative housing such as government chalets will be allocated i.e. Aloha Chalets located at Loyang.

Who will be issued a HQO?

Travellers entering Singapore, the previous destination being Mexico or with a travel history to Mexico over the past seven days will be quarantined for seven days.

What must you do when being quarantined?

While under HQO, you must:

- ✓ Stay at home throughout the quarantine period of 7 days; from the time you entered Singapore from when you last left the affected country.
- ✓ Monitor your temperature twice daily and check for other symptoms.
- ✓ Remain in your home at all times and provide truthful information required of you.
- ✓ Minimise contact with other family members.

- ✓ Arrange with your relatives/friends to purchase groceries and assist in your daily needs.
- ✓ Alert all persons who reside in your home or visit your home that you are under home quarantine.
- ✓ Activate the ambulance (calling 993) if you should develop any fever or flu symptoms while under HQO.
- ✓ Practice good personal hygiene: -
 - Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
 - Wash your hands every time you touch your nose, mouth or eyes.
 - Maintain good indoor ventilation.
 - Surfaces soiled with sputum, phlegm, nose discharge or vomit should be washed/wiped with 1:50 diluted household bleach (i.e. adding 1 part of bleach to 50 parts of water) immediately. Metallic surfaces can be cleaned with 70% alcohol.



How will my employer know that I am under quarantine?

The HQO, which is issued to you, includes a letter, which you can send to your employer to inform them that you are under home quarantine.

What are the consequences of breaking quarantine?

Breaking an official HQO is punishable by law. A first offence would result in a fine of \$10,000 or imprisonment. For second or subsequent offence, would be a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

My HQO is expiring. Will the Ministry be issuing a letter to inform me and/or my employer that I can return to work officially?

No. Once you have served out the HQO and are well, you are fit to return to work. The Ministry has no objections if your employer wishes to send you to a doctor to certify a clean bill of health before you start work.

How will my employer treat my HQO?

There are no specified guidelines from the Ministry. It is currently up to the company's discretion to treat the HQO as paid leave, unpaid leave, outpatient medical leave or hospitalisation leave.

What should you do when returning from other areas with evidence of community transmission?

If you are returning from other areas with evidence of community transmission of Influenza A (H1N1-2009) (i.e., the states of California, New York and Texas in the United States, and the state of Nova Scotia in Canada), MOH advises the following:

- ✓ Stay at home for 7 days.
- ✓ Self monitor your temperature daily, twice a day.
- ✓ Check themselves for flu-like illness and symptoms.
- ✓ Refrain from joining mass gatherings, e.g., going to the cinemas, shopping malls, supermarkets, etc.

What should you do if you develop signs of infection?

- ✓ Should you develop respiratory illness with fever (temperature > 38 deg C) within seven days after your return, you should put on a surgical mask and call 993 for an ambulance. You will be transported to TTSH (Tan Tock Seng Hospital) Emergency Department for further assessment.
- ✓ Disclose your travel histories to their doctors.

How will the HQO affect household members?

While under HQO, do not invite visitors to your home. Your family members or others in your household can continue with their usual activities, but if they fall ill, you should inform the officers immediately.

What should I do if my family members or I become unwell during the quarantine period?

If you develop any flu-like symptoms such as fever of 38°C or higher, cough, sore throat, runny nose and shortness of breath, you should put on a surgical mask and immediately call 993 to arrange for an ambulance to transport you to TTSH A&E for assessment.

If medical treatment is required for other minor illness e.g. severe stomachache or sprained ankle, you may call a designated help line.



How will the Ministry monitor those who are under HQO?

Cisco officers will serve you the HQO and install an electronic camera at your home. You will be given a home quarantine kit, which includes an oral thermometer and a mask (the installation of the electronic camera may be carried separately from the issuing of the HQO). A nurse will explain to you the conditions in the HQO, which you have to observe, and how to take your temperature.

During the home quarantine period, CISCO officers will make random calls to you between 8 am and 11 pm. When called, you will have to turn on and present yourself in front of the electronic camera to show that you are at home.

If I need to go out to attend to urgent matters, what should I do?

It is possible that you will spread the Influenza A (H1N1) virus to others, even though you are feeling well, as infected persons can be asymptomatic in the early stages of the disease. Therefore, it is important that you comply fully with the Home Quarantine Order and do not leave your residence under any circumstances. If you need assistance with personal matters, please call the officer at the designated help line.