

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

## Swine Flu Pandemic: Planning for School Break/Return to School

*With term holidays approaching and a number of families planning to travel, both overseas and around NZ, we are aware of the threat posed by the swine flu epidemic, particularly the risk posed by travellers returning as potential carriers. At this stage, the Ministry of Health's advice is that if staff and students are well and symptom free after returning from an affected area overseas they can return to school and do not need to remain at home for any period after arriving back in the country, or back to the home town/city. However, this may change in the coming weeks and families need to plan for this possibility. The risk is that if an infected student returns to school and is in contact with other students and staff for even a day, the whole school could be closed for a week. The school board asks you to carefully monitor your family's health closely as you return from overseas, or your trip within New Zealand, and if there are even the slightest flu symptoms, do not send your son or daughter back to school until you have first telephoned to check with your doctor, or alternatively check through the MOH Healthline 0800 611 116.*

### Swine flu-Influenza A (H1N1)

- **Signs and symptoms of influenza** include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also experience diarrhoea and vomiting.
- **Sick people should stay home until they are well, rather than going to school or work.** Try to avoid contact with sick people and reduce time spent in crowded settings. If you become sick, stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep you from infecting others. Most people will be able to safely recover at home.
- **You should seek medical advice if necessary (by phone first), for example if your condition worsens.** This is particularly important for people with underlying medical conditions who are at greater risk of developing complications from influenza. If you need medical advice, please phone **Healthline 0800 611 116** in the first instance, or your GP. Do not turn up at a hospital or medical centre before doing this as you can spread germs to other people.
- If you are caring for someone with the flu, watch for signs that they may need further medical attention, including: difficulty breathing, chest pain, blueness around the lips, inability to keep fluids down, becoming less alert or developing confusion. More information can be found on [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz), [www.humanswineflu.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanswineflu.health.vic.gov.au) and [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm).
- Be prepared - This is the time for people to make sure they're prepared to be self-sufficient for an extended period of time, should they need to. This means you should have enough food water and basic medical supplies including paracetamol or ibuprofen, as well as regular medications, nappies for babies, cleaning products, tissues and bathroom supplies for at least a week.
- Hand hygiene is still the single most effective measure in protecting yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly.
- Alcohol-based cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs spread this way.
- Practise good cough and sneeze etiquette. This means covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of the tissue in a lined rubbish bin with a lid or plastic bag.
- Checklists and advice on how individuals and families can prepare for a pandemic can be found on [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz).

Information taken from: [www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/influenza-a-h1n1-update-seventyfour-140609?Open#Protect](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/influenza-a-h1n1-update-seventyfour-140609?Open#Protect)