

## Shanghai's International Healthcare Organizations Align on Influenza A (H1N1)

September 8, 2009

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared an Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in June of this year. Since then there has been heightened concern from the public about the health implications, especially in the upcoming fall and winter seasons. As a service to our community, we hope this joint statement will provide some of the answers you seek. We have also provided some important resources if you require further information.

### What is Influenza A (H1N1) and what are the symptoms?

Influenza is a type of respiratory infection that is transmitted from person-to-person, primarily by respiratory droplets. Early symptoms are similar to seasonal flu (cough, fever, sore throat, headache, runny nose, general fatigue, and muscle pains). Some patients might also have vomiting and diarrhea. Severe cases can progress quickly to a pneumonia-like illness, which involves shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.

### How can I prevent myself from getting sick?

Simple measures like frequent hand washing, covering your mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing, wearing a surgical facemask if unwell or a N95-type facemask if exposed to someone who is sick, avoiding crowded public areas, and staying home from work or school if sick with a fever, can prevent you from getting sick or spreading the virus.

### What is Tamiflu and how can I get it?

Oseltamivir (commonly referred to as Tamiflu) is a prescription antiviral medication. If used early (within 48 hours of onset of symptoms), it can help prevent some of the serious complications of Influenza A. The supply of this medication is limited and resistance is developing. It is recommended by the CDC for confirmed or suspected cases of influenza, for people with severe symptoms, or people at risk of medical complications.

### Do you have any immunization to prevent influenza A (H1N1)?

Vaccines against Influenza A (H1N1) have been developed and are being produced in many countries. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people between the ages of 25 and 64 who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems. Regular seasonal flu vaccine will not provide protection against this strain. Nevertheless, those who have not had a seasonal flu vaccine should consider doing so while supplies last.

### What will happen if I go to a clinic or hospital?

The routine processes for managing patients with infections will be in effect. Screening procedures may be in place pending the Shanghai Health Bureau's instructions. Those seen at our facilities with mild flu symptoms will be treated as usual. For severe symptoms, a group outbreak of illness, and Influenza A positive, H1N1 confirmatory testing will be recommended at designated centers. Lab tests and medications may not be recommended. Self quarantine at home for at least 7 days is advisable for those not severely ill.

### What else should I know?

It is important to be prepared and to know what to do to protect yourself and your family. Be assured that we remain committed to providing you the best care during this pandemic by keeping you updated on recommendations from the CDC, WHO, and the Ministry of Health.

### Where can I get updated information?

Additional helpful resources include:

WHO: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

Chinese CDC: <http://www.bjcdc.org>

United States CDC: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentSwineFluUS.aspx>