

**INFORMATION LEAFLET ON THE
INFLUENZA A (H1N1) VIRUS IN GENEVA**
(June 2009)



WHAT IS THE INFLUENZA A (H1N1) VIRUS?

This is a new type of influenza or “flu” virus that is currently causing outbreaks of disease in people globally. It spreads mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Occasionally people may become infected by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus, and then touching their own mouth or nose.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INFLUENZA A (H1N1)
VIRUS INFECTION?**

The symptoms appear to be similar to that of regular human flu, and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, lethargy, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with this virus.

**HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM THE
INFLUENZA A (H1N1) VIRUS?**

Protective measures to avoid getting or spreading the influenza A (H1N1) virus are the same as for seasonal flu, and most other respiratory infections. They include:

- staying at home if unwell with fever and “flu-like” symptoms;
- washing hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing (alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective);
- encouraging all people to cover their mouths and noses, when they cough or sneeze, with a disposable handkerchief (tissue) or sleeve (do not cover your mouth with a bare hand as your hand may become contaminated and facilitate virus transmission to others);
- minimizing social contact (e.g. handshaking, kissing); and
- trying to avoid close contact with sick people.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM SICK WITH “FLU-LIKE” SYMPTOMS?

- If you experience “flu-like” symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat, you should **stay in your home, hotel or residence** and avoid close contact with others until at least 24 hours after your symptoms are completely gone. Wash your hands frequently and always cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with a disposable handkerchief (tissue).
- Telephone your ILO manager or head of delegation, to inform them of your absence and to ensure that they have your current contact details.
- If you live locally, call your usual treating doctor if you need medical assistance.
- If you cannot reach your usual doctor, or if you do not have one, you may call the ILO Medical Service on 022 799 7133 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- For outside working hours, if you need to see a doctor, you may call:

In Geneva:

Genève Médecins: 0041 (0) 22 754 54 54 or

SOS Médecins: 0041 (0) 22 748 49 50

If you have severe symptoms such as difficulty with breathing, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion and severe or persistent vomiting, you should seek health care and treatment immediately by calling the Emergency Care of the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG) at 0041 (0) 22 372 81 11. If you are unable to get assistance at this number, please call 144.

In France:

The emergency telephone number to find a doctor at any time is “15”.

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IF I AM ILL, WILL I NEED ANTIVIRAL MEDICINE SUCH AS TAMIFLU?

Most of the influenza A (H1N1) cases appear to be mild, similar to regular seasonal influenza. Therefore, you should rest, drink plenty of liquids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms (e.g. of fever, cough, sore throat). Flu patients with additional health risks, such as severe chronic disease, which may lower immunity, should seek treatment when ill. You should only take antiviral medicine if it is prescribed by a doctor.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE AFTER I LEAVE THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA?

If you are well, you can return to work. However, if, after leaving the International Labour Conference in Geneva, you become ill with “flu-like” symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough, blocked nose, chills, headaches, body aches, fatigue, and possibly diarrhoea and vomiting, you should remain at home, and seek medical attention immediately.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

More information can be found at:

- International Labour Office
www.ilo.org/intranet/english/bureau/pers/pandemic/index.htm.
- United Nations <http://w.un.org/staff/pandemic/>.
- World Health Organization www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html.
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.
- For Switzerland: OFSP (Office fédéral de la santé publique) www.bag.admin.ch/aktuell/index.html?lang=fr and the article Grippe porcine A/H1N1 (not available in English) telephone hotline: 0041 (0) 31 322 21 00.
- For France (advice for travellers): www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs_909/pays_12191/mexique_12292/index.html. Telephone hotline: 0825 302 302 (dialling from France) or 00 33 1 53 56 73 23 (dialling from abroad).