

ECDC INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS

New influenza A(H1N1)

Updated 18 May 2009 – 12:00

Influenza A(H1N1) is being reported from an increasing number of locations all over the world. New areas where this disease is confirmed are identified nearly every day. Therefore, precautionary measures for travellers (see below) become increasingly important.

Influenza spreads from person to person through coughing or sneezing, or by direct or indirect contact with respiratory secretions from infectious persons. Therefore, the risk of transmission of influenza can be significantly reduced by some simple methods.

In response to the outbreak of the new influenza A(H1N1) ECDC suggests the following:

1 Before you travel

- If you have any underlying chronic disease, contact your doctor!
- Get familiar with simple methods how to protect yourself (see below)!

2 During your travel

Simple methods how to protect yourself are:

- **Avoid close contact with sick people!**
Signs of influenza may be one or more of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with infection by the new influenza virus.
- **Wash or clean your hands frequently!**
Washing or disinfecting your hands thoroughly will help protect you from viruses. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. And don't just rinse them quickly, you should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds each time. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also effectively reduce the amount of influenza virus on contaminated hands and are easy to use. Liquids or gels are more effective than alcohol-soaked tissues.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth!**
Viruses are often spread when a person touches something that has been contaminated and subsequently touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

If you are ill and suspect influenza you should:

- **Stay at home or in your hotel room unless you need to seek medical attention!**
Children with fever or influenza like symptoms should seek prompt medical attention.

The use of prophylaxis with neuraminidase inhibitors (e.g. Tamiflu®, Relenza®) is a decision to be taken by a physician, based on the individual risk assessment.

Persons being immunised with the seasonal vaccine need to be aware this will not protect them against the new influenza A(H1N1) virus.

Further information on personal protective measures for reducing the risk of acquiring or transmitting human influenza is available at:

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/files/pdf/Health_topics/0905_Influenza_A\(H1N1\)_Personal_protective_measures.pdf](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/files/pdf/Health_topics/0905_Influenza_A(H1N1)_Personal_protective_measures.pdf)

3 After you return

In case you develop fever (38°C or more) and influenza-like symptoms (such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough, fatigue, general body pains) within seven days of your return from travel, you should rapidly seek medical attention by telephone, informing the persons you consult about your recent travel, in accordance to your national health authorities' recommendations.