

HEALTH ADVISORY INFLUENZA H1N1 IN THE INTER-PANDEMIC PERIOD

1. The world is currently in an influenza inter-pandemic period, whereby the influenza H1N1 virus behaves like any other circulating influenza viruses in the community and spreads in the same way as that of regular seasonal influenza viruses.
2. The clinical presentation and severity of the influenza H1N1 virus is similar to other influenza viruses. People may contract the influenza viruses from the community at large via cough and droplets of people who are infected with the virus. People may also become infected by touching a surface or object with influenza viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose without washing their hands first.
3. In order to prevent the spread of influenza viruses including H1N1 in the community, everyone should take the necessary precautions by following basic hygiene rules such as:-
 - a. Continue to maintain a high level of personal hygiene, frequent hand washing with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer, and practice cough etiquette.
 - b. Continue to maintain a healthy lifestyle such as having balanced diet, drinking enough fluids, exercise regularly and having adequate rest.
4. If an individual has symptoms and signs of influenza (such as fever, cough, difficulty breathing), he or she is advised to seek early treatment at the nearest health facility. Unwell individuals are advised to be socially responsible and stay away from work until they are certified well by their doctor.
5. If an individual is diagnosed as influenza or H1N1, it is not necessary to close premises or institution or isolate his or her contacts. Well contacts are free to continue their work and daily activities as usual.
6. Individuals at higher risk of influenza infection (such as pregnant mothers, and those with chronic diseases) are encouraged to ask their doctor about getting vaccinated with the seasonal influenza vaccine that is available in the market.