

Ministry of Public Health

Public Health Advice No. 1

Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

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Currently, there are outbreaks of influenza A(H1N1) which spread from human to human. Some patients have influenza-like symptoms; many of them had pneumonia and died in several cities of Mexico. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 27 April 2009, there were 28 and 40 laboratory-confirmed cases in Mexico and the United States respectively. In the US, the illness was mild and no deaths have been reported; however, cases were found in 5 states including California (7), Texas (2), New York (28), Kansas (2), and Ohio (1). In addition, cases were reported in Canada, Spain, and Scotland, these cases fell ill after return from Mexico.

At the present time, international transmission of infectious diseases can occur rapidly. To prevent influenza A/H1N1 from spreading into Thailand, the Ministry of Public Health is seeking cooperation from all sectors in implementing various measures, especially those that keep influenza and pneumonia patients under more intensive surveillance as well as use lab-test results to confirm such an infection. Such measures also include the treatment for influenza patients; the stockpiling of anti-viral drugs, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment; and the provision of public health services for international air-travellers by means of distributing health-warning cards to them and taking their temperature with a thermo-scanning machine. And thus the Ministry of Public Health has made recommendations to the public for preventing the disease as follows:

1. Travel to an area where there is an on-going outbreak, if not necessary, should be postponed or delayed until the situation becomes normal.
2. In case it is necessary to go to an epidemic area, the travellers are advised to avoid the crowd and exposure to people with coughs. Also, they are recommended to wash their hands with water and soap or rub them with alcohol gel. Meanwhile, the travellers should strictly follow the recommendations issued by local authorities.
3. Travellers from an epidemic area have some influenza-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, severe muscular pains, etc. within seven days after arrival, they are advised to wear masks or use tissue paper or handkerchiefs to cover their nose every time they cough or sneeze and immediately seek medical treatment and advice.
4. Maintaining good health by the following means.
 - 4.1 Eating nutritious food – vegetables and fruits in particular, drinking clean water, and having enough sleep as well as taking regularly exercise, and avoiding smoking and alcohol.
 - 4.2 Washing one's hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.
 - 4.3 In case a patient with influenza-like symptoms is found in a residence or workplace, notifying local a public health office or a Village Health Volunteer to take immediate prevention and control actions.

For questions, please call the Department of Disease Control's Operations Centre at 02-5903333 or search for more information at the Ministry of Public Health's website: www.moph.go.th.

Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

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