

Friday 29 May 2009



MEDIA RELEASE

SWINE FLU ... BE INFORMED ... BE PREPARED...

Wimmera Health Care Group has reported no confirmed cases of H1N1 (Swine Flu) as yet, however, they believe it is inevitable that there will be infections in the Wimmera.

Chief Executive, Mr Chris Scott said that Wimmera Health Care Group is pleased that the new virus does not appear to be any worse than the seasonal influenza that circulates every year. "It is, however, a virus that no person has immunity to and it will spread easily" he said.

Mr Scott said that the risk of infection in the community can be decreased in many ways.

Wimmera Health Care Group urges all members of the community to participate in the following simple but effective measures.

Personal Hygiene

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin after you use it.
- Regular hand washing with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze and before meals. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- If you have the influenza, you should avoid public places and close contact with others, especially children.
- Frequent hand washing or use of alcohol rubs, particularly when in the public.

Community Health (businesses, etc)

- Frequent wiping of high touch surfaces eg. shop counters, door knobs, phones etc with disposable wipes.
- Boxes of tissues in easy reach.
- Rubbish bins lined with plastic bags for tissues etc.
- Distancing. Standing a meter away from anyone.

Mr Scott said that people who are at increased risk are those with serious health problems such as lung disorder, heart condition, diabetes, asthma, pregnancy, the very young and very old and that these people should avoid crowds and public places as much as possible.

Any person who believes they might have the flu should ring **NURSE-ON-CALL on ph 1300 60 60 24** for expert health information and advice (free call 24 hours, 7 days a week).

People should contact their doctor if they have an influenza type illness, telling the receptionist at the time, of their concern and illness.

People should not attend their local hospital unless they are *seriously unwell* with flu-like symptoms.

Flu clinics have been set up in Melbourne to keep unwell public from infecting hospital patients.

Mr Scott said that a clinic would be set up in Horsham when required. "The public will be informed of the place and times when the clinic is available as soon as there is a need" he said.

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