

Laboratory Alert

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu)

3 pm 5 June 2009

This notice is to provide advice regarding the influenza A H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu).

On 3 June 2009 Victoria moved its pandemic plan level to MODIFIED SUSTAIN.

The Victorian public are being asked to contact their local GP as a first port of call if they have influenza like illness.

The public are being asked to **only** present to their local hospital if they are seriously ill.

Who is being tested for Human Swine Flu?

In this modified sustain phase testing on each case is NOT required. A clinical case definition is applied instead.

Current case definition

Adults and Children > 12 months old

Acute onset of illness with a measured temperature of $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ or significant history of fever (rigors, sweating, chills) plus two or more of cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue/tiredness or shortness of breath.

Confirmation by testing is NOT required to inform decisions on quarantine or use of antiviral medication

Laboratory testing criteria:

Laboratory testing should be limited to:

- Symptomatic patients with severe clinical disease (ie hospitalised).
- Symptomatic patients at high risk of complications (for example pregnant women, the immuno-suppressed, those with chronic cardio-pulmonary disease, metabolic disease such as diabetes, or morbid obesity).
- Symptomatic close contacts of individuals at high risk of complications (as above).
- Symptomatic potential index cases or early cases in closed environments where individuals are at increased risk from severe disease including nursing homes, special developmental schools, child care centres, hospitals and community residential facilities. (Up to five cases usually suffice to diagnose the cause of respiratory outbreaks. Sampling every symptomatic individual is not required).

Mild clinical disease should not be tested.

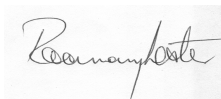
The usual surveillance programs should continue. Seasonal surveillance through sentinel services is to be enhanced.

Mechanism for testing

If a patient presents meeting the above case definition and are included in the laboratory testing criteria, we request that doctors:

- Take nose and throat swabs combined in a single vial of viral transport medium (VTM), or placed in several mls of sterile saline if VTM is not available.
- The swab should be sent for testing via the normal pathology services.

Yours sincerely



Dr Rosemary Lester
Acting Chief Health Officer