

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

28 April 2009

Ministry of Public Health

Public Health Advice No.2

Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

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Situation update

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 29 April 2009, in Mexico 26 laboratory-confirmed human cases of influenza A (N1N1) with 7 deaths were reported. In the United States 91 cases and 1 death were reported in 10 states : California (14), Texas (16; 1 death), New York (51), Kansas (2), Massachusetts (2), Michigan (2), Ohio (1), Arizona (1), Indiana (1), and Nevada (1). In addition, some influenza A(H1N1) cases were reported in Austria (1), Canada (13), Germany (3), Israel (2), New Zealand (3), Spain (4), and the United Kingdom (5) after returning from Mexico; no deaths were reported in such countries. At present, Mexico is implementing measures to screen passengers on departure flights for influenza A(H1N1) infection, which may cause some delays in their travel.

On 25 April 2009, WHO made a determination that the influenza A(H1N1) outbreak in Mexico is a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

On 27 April 2009, WHO raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from phase 3 to phase 4. However, WHO is not recommending travel restrictions or border closure. In case any people have influenza-like illness, they are advised to postpone their international travels; and in case they get sick during international travel, they are advised to seek medical advice immediately. Furthermore, consumption of well-cooked pork or pork products bears no risk of influenza A(H1N1) infection. People are advised to frequently wash their hands with soap and water; and if they have influenza-like illness, they should see a doctor.

Most recently, on 29 April 2009, WHO raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from phase 4 to phase 5. Also, it stresses that every country has to implement its influenza pandemic preparedness plan, especially measures related to intensive disease surveillance, rapid case detection, medical treatment, and infection control in hospitals and health facilities.

The situation in Thailand: According to the intensive surveillance on the travellers who just returned from epidemic areas, particularly Mexico and the United States, as well as laboratory tests conducted on three persons, there has been no case of this disease.

The prevention and control of the disease: Thailand has been prepared for influenza pandemic since 2004 and state agencies concerned are implementing the influenza preparedness plan. The current significant measures include:

1. Measures to prevent influenza A(H1N1) from spreading into Thailand

- Accelerating disease surveillance on travellers arriving from foreign countries
- Screening travellers arriving from foreign countries by installing thermo-scanners at all international airports in the country
- Distributing Health Beware Cards with advice on self-care and how to contact health authorities
- Seeking cooperation from airlines in requesting travellers to complete illness-monitoring forms
- Seeking cooperation from travel agencies, hotels, and airlines in taking care of their international travellers as well as giving them advice on influenza A(H1N1) prevention

2. Measures for case detection and corrective actions if there is a case in country

- Improving the disease surveillance system in order to carry out immediate case detection
- Heightening the preparedness in providing medical care for the patient with an isolation room as well as medical supplies

3. General measures

- Disseminating the information about influenza A (H1N1) and warning the general public to avoid travelling to an epidemic area
- Coordinating with the World Health Organization in requesting the influenza A(H1N1)-stricken countries to conduct "exit screening"

As there have been no reports of this disease in Thailand, the general public is advised not to panic; however, for disease prevention and health promotion purposes, they ought to observe the following advice:

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. 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 frequently or rub them with alcohol gel. Meanwhile, the travellers should strictly follow the recommendations issued by local authorities.

2. For travellers from an epidemic area who 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 and mouth every time they cough or sneeze and immediately seek medical advice. In case they are not severely ill and are allowed by a physician to take care of themselves at home, they are advised not to go to work, school and crowded public places in order to avoid spreading the infectious virus to other people.

3. Maintaining good health by means of :

3.1 Eating nutritious food – vegetables and fruits in particular, drinking clean water, and having enough sleep as well as regularly taking exercise and avoiding smoking and alcohol.

3.2 Washing one's hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.

3.3 In case a patient with influenza-like symptoms is found in a residence or workplace, notifying a public health office or a Village Health Volunteer to take immediate prevention and control actions.

For more information, please visit the Ministry of Public Health's website : www.moph.go.th and for questions, call the Department of Disease Control's Call Centre at 0 2590 3333 or the Ministry of Health's Call Centre at 0 2590 1994 around the clock.

Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

30 April 2009

Ministry of Public Health
Public Health Advice No. 3
Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

As the World Health Organization has renamed the new strain of influenza rapidly spreading in many regions of the world at present "*influenza A(H1N1)*", the Ministry of Public Health – to be in line with such renaming as well as to facilitate better public understanding about the disease – announces that "**the influenza spreading in Mexico**" has been renamed (in Thai) "**New strain influenza A(H1N1)**" or, in brief, "**New strain influenza 2009**", and the pandemic situation is brought up to date as follows:

Situation update

According to the World Health Organization's most recent report on the pandemic, as of 5 May 2009, there were 1490 laboratory-confirmed human cases of influenza A(H1N1) from 21 countries which include Mexico (822 ; 29 deaths), the United States (403; 1 death), Austria (1), Canada (140), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1) Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (4), Germany (9), Ireland (1), Israel (4), Italy (5), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (6), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (2), Spain (57), Switzerland (1), and the United Kingdom (27). In Thailand, no cases of this illness have been reported.

More cases of influenza A(H1N1) in many countries have constantly been reported so far. Additional to the Public Health Advice No. 2, the Ministry of Public Health has issued additional advice for travellers departing for and arriving from the countries where confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1) have been reported as follows:

Advice for travellers departing for the countries with on-going outbreaks of influenza A(H1N1)

Before travel

- Pay close attention to the pandemic situation of influenza A(H1N1) in order to be informed about the areas where the outbreak has been detected (the daily situation update is available on the Ministry of Public Health's website: www.moph.go.th).
- Practise as advised by health authority of the country that one is visiting in order to prevent the disease.
- Carry some masks, alcohol gel for hand-cleaning, antipyretic, and medicines for personal use.
- Search in advance for the information about health service in the city that one is going to visit, in case it is necessary for one to request medical treatment.
- Take out insurance against illness with international protection before travelling abroad.
- Presently, there is no evidence that seasonal influenza vaccine can prevent influenza A(H1N1). If anybody, however, wants to be immunized with a seasonal influenza vaccine, he is advised to be vaccinated at least two weeks before travel in order to have adequate immunity during the trip.
- The general public are then advised not to take antiviral drug for disease prevention, or carry some while travelling abroad. The drugs are categorized specially controlled drug and must be prescribed only by a physician. Additionally, the medicine will

probably cause some side effects like nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headache, or even, in some cases, hallucination.

- If one has symptoms of influenza-like illness such as fever, cough, runny nose, severe muscular pains, etc., one is advised to wear a mask and immediately go to see a physician for proper treatment.

While travel

- Spare additional time at the airport since screening of passengers for illness in various countries will take certain time and; this may cause delay in travelling.
- While staying in a foreign country, one should pay close attention to the epidemic situation in the country of destination.
- Practise strictly as advised by local health authorities.
- Whenever coughing or sneezing, one is advised to cover one's mouth and nose with tissue paper and dispose of it in a garbage bin. If tissue paper is not available, one may cough into one's sleeve to reduce the spread of the virus.
- Wash one's hands with water and soap frequently or rub them with alcohol gel, particularly after coughing or sneezing.
- *Avoid rubbing one's eyes, picking one's nose, or even prodding at one's mouth with fingers in order to decrease the possibility of infection.*
- Avoid being in close contact with patients or persons with coughs.
- In case one has fever with other influenza-like symptoms such as cough, sore throat, etc., or has been in contact with an influenza or acute respiratory patient within the past seven days, one is advised to see a doctor immediately.

Advice for travellers arriving from the countries with on-going outbreaks of influenza A (H1N1)

- If a passenger has fever while on board, he/she is advised to notify airline staff or flight attendants so that he/she will be properly taken care of by the airline, and other passengers at the airport as well as on board will be protected.
- Thailand is screening airline passengers for influenza A(H1N1) with thermo scanners on arrival at all international airports. In case a passenger with fever is detected, he/she will be examined and taken care of by a physician at check-points according to protocol given by the Ministry of Public Health.
- Passengers who do not have fever and do not fall ill are advised avoid social activities and observe their own symptoms for seven days after arrival.
- In case a passenger has fever together with any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, vomiting and diarrhoea, he/she should avoid close contact with other people, wear a face mask or cover his/her nose with tissue paper when coughing, and frequently wash his/her hands with water and soap or rub them with alcohol gel. The passenger is strongly advised to see a doctor, showing the health beware card given by quarantine authorities at the airport.
- If the passenger is not hospitalized, he/she is advised to suspend work or classes, stay at his/her residence, and observe his/her own symptoms within seven days after arrival from a foreign country.
- Also, the passenger is advised to cover his/her mouth and nose with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the paper into a garbage bin as well as wash his/her hands with water and soap or rub them with alcohol gel.

For more information, please visit the Ministry of Public Health's website: www.moph.go.th, and for questions, call the Department of Disease Control's Operations Centre at 0 2590 333 or the National Institute of Medical Emergency System at 1669 around the clock.

Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
6 May 2009

Ministry of Public Health

Public Health Advice No. 4 Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

At present the outbreak of influenza A(H1N1) is ongoing and several cases of the illness have been reported in Asia. According to the World Health Organization, as of 10 May 2009, 3,440 human cases of influenza A(H1N1) in 29 countries, including 48 deaths (45 in Mexico, 2 in the United States, and 1 in Canada), were reported.

The Ministry of Public Health has been strengthening the medical and public health system to cope with various emerging infectious diseases. To prevent and control the outbreak of influenza A(H1N1), the ministry has been implementing three main strategies: (1) **prevention of disease introduction** – all the international disease control checkpoints have taken actions to prevent the introduction of the new virus into the country; (2) **detection, containment and mitigation**– actions being undertaken include rapid detection, efficient diagnoses and treatment for influenza A(H1N1) patients at all healthcare facilities across the nation, accelerating the function of surveillance and rapid response teams in all districts, and training all village health volunteers (VHVs) to assist disease surveillance at the village level and give advice on disease prevention to villagers; (3) **general preparedness**–health education and public relations measures have been employed to educate the public about illness prevention.

As it is now close to the opening of the new academic semester, the Ministry of Public Health takes this opportunity to provide additional advice to the general public, travellers and educational institutions as follows:

Advice for the general public

People should be confident with the measures put in place and strictly follow the Ministry of Public Health's advice which underlines: maintaining good health by taking an adequate rest, regularly taking exercise, eating nutritious food – vegetables and fruit in particular; fostering health habits for disease prevention – such as eating freshly cooked food, using serving spoons, and washing hands often. Moreover, in case a person has influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, phlegm, etc.), he/she is advised to cover his/her mouth and nose with a handkerchief or tissue paper when coughing or sneezing and dispose of it into a garbage bin. Also, he/she is advised to wear a face mask when being with other people.

If an acquaintance has fever within seven days after returning from a foreign country, he/she is advised to see a doctor for proper medical treatment immediately.

Advice for travellers returning from areas with on-going outbreaks

- In case one has fever on board, he/she is advised to notify airline staff or flight attendants to be properly taken care of, to ensure the safety of other passengers at the airport and on board.
- Thailand is screening airline passengers for the illness with thermo scanners on arrival at all international airports. In case a passenger with fever is detected, he/she will be examined and taken care of by a physician at the checkpoint according to the guidelines given by the Ministry of Public Health.
- Passengers who do not have fever or illness are advised to observe their own symptoms for seven days.

- While observing one's symptoms, if he/she has fever together with any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, vomiting and diarrhoea, he/she should avoid close contact with other people, and wear a mask or cover his/her mouth and nose with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing. Also, he/she is advised to often wash one's hands with water and soap or rub them with alcohol gel. He/she is strongly advised to see a doctor and show the health beware card given by quarantine authorities at the airport, for thorough examination.
- If one is not hospitalized, he/she is advised to suspend work or classes, stay at his/her residence, and observe his/her own symptoms for seven days after arrival.
- One is advised to cover his/her mouth and nose with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the paper into a garbage bin. Also, he/she is advised to wear a face mask while being with other people.

Advice for educational institutions

- All educational institutions have been requested to check whether any of their students have just returned from an area with on-going influenza A(H1N1) outbreak and communicate with the students as well as their guardians to advise disease prevention. The students are to observe their own symptoms for seven days after arrival to Thailand. In case such students have fever together with respiratory symptoms such as sore throat, cough, runny nose, etc., they are strongly advised to see a doctor for examination, diagnosis and treatment, and suspend studying until they get well.
- Teachers of classes are requested to check the number of students who are absent from class each day. In case there are students with influenza-like symptoms or an unusual number of absent students (three students or more in one classroom), find out the cause of such an illness or absenteeism. If the absent students are suspected of getting sick with influenza, this should be notified to local public health authorities (in Bangkok, call 0 2246 0358 or 0 2245 8106; outside Bangkok, call the Provincial Public Health Office) for case investigation and timely disease control actions.
- Educational institutions are requested to provide facilities for hand washing such as wash basins, soap, etc. for students as well as conduct campaigns for promotion of hand washing. In the beginning, the Ministry of Public Health will distribute some face masks to educational institutions. The face masks are available at each institution's first aid room for sick students for prevention of disease spread.

For more information, please visit the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)'s website: www.moph.go.th, and for questions, call the Department of Disease Control's Operations Centre at 0 2590 3333 or MOPH's Hotline Centre at 0 2590 1994 around the clock.

Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
10 May 2009

Ministry of Public Health

Public Health Advice No. 5

Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

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The situation of influenza A(H1N1) pandemic as of 11 May 2009, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), has shown that 4,694 cases including 48 deaths (Mexico, 45; the United States, 2; and Canada, 1) were reported from 30 countries. An individual with fever or unwell condition is advised to postpone his/her travel until he/she gets well. Travellers from foreign countries, in case of having fever, should seek medical care immediately. These practices will considerably help curb the spread of communicable diseases, including influenza.

WHO's most recent report shows that the influenza A(H1N1) cases – especially those detected outside Mexico – tend to be less severe than those seen in the initial phase of the epidemic. Many cases need not be hospitalized. Moreover, three deaths in the United States and Canada, in fact, had underlying chronic diseases such as heart diseases, etc.

Today (12 May 2009) the Ministry of Public Health announces identification of two laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1) in Thailand. The two cases were infected in Mexico, developed fever after arrival in Thailand and had mild symptoms. They had been treated with a complete course of antiviral drugs and had completely recovered. Individuals in close contact with the patients were treated with a complete course of antiviral drugs and were followed up daily and none of them fell ill. They can now safely join any activities with other people.

As the two cases were detected and promptly treated right after their arrival in Thailand, the disease was contained quickly enough to prevent spreading in the country. Thus the country's level of risk remains similar to the past two weeks. All concerned authorities, however, must not underestimate the situation and should maintain the full alert level on disease surveillance and control.

Thailand, under the National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza and Preparedness for Pandemic Influenza, has been working continuously with multi-sector partners on preparedness planning for several years. Based on the existing preparedness, the Ministry of Public Health is now intensifying surveillance, patient care, and risk communication in order to ensure effective prevention and control of the emerging influenza A(H1N1).

However, understanding and involvement of all sectors and all individuals is the primary key of success in diseases surveillance, control and mitigation. The Ministry of Public Health thus reiterates its advice for the public, village health volunteers, and educational institutions to seek cooperation in influenza A(H1N1) prevention as follows:

Advice for general public

- Maintain good health by having an adequate rest, regularly taking exercise, and eating nutritious food.

- Foster health habits for disease prevention by eating freshly cooked food, using serving spoons, washing hands often, and wearing a face mask whenever coughing.
- Persons who have just come from foreign countries, in case of having influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle aches) are strongly advised to see a doctor.
- In case of having an acquaintance who has just returned from a foreign country and has influenza-like symptoms within seven days of arrival, advice him/her to see a doctor or health official.

Advice for village health volunteers

- Keep close watch for influenza-like illness in the community. If such illness is seen, especially in one who has just returned from a foreign country within seven days, advice him/her to see a doctor and report to the local health authority.
- Disseminate the knowledge about influenza A(H1N1) and give advice on health promotion and disease prevention according to the guidelines given by the Ministry of Public Health.

Advice for educational institutions

- On opening of new semester, it is advisable that schools and educational institutions carry out a daily check of attendance and watch for sick students. They should also encourage health promotion and disease prevention among students. In addition, educational institutions are advised to provide proper facilities for disease prevention according to the guidelines given by the Ministry of Public Health (Public Health Advice No. 4).

For more information, please visit the Ministry of Public Health's website: www.moph.go.th, and for questions, call the Department of Disease Control's Operation Centre at 0 2590 3333 or MOPH's Hotline Centre at 0 2590 1994 around the clock.

Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
12 May 2009