



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

MH 34:85

8 May 2009

All Registered TCM Practitioners
All TCM Clinic Managers/Owners

MOH CIRCULAR 47/2009
ALERT: INFLUENZA A (H1N1-2009)

Our Disease Outbreak Response System Alert (DORSCON) status is currently at Orange. Although the case fatality rate was initially reported to be as high as 6% in Mexico, additional information on the influenza A (H1N1-2009) virus has emerged to suggest that Influenza A (H1N1 2009) seems milder than originally feared.

2 Reports of underreporting of mild cases, and reclassification of a number of deaths initially thought to be caused by H1N1 suggest a much lower case fatality in Mexico. An analysis of New York City cases associated with influenza outbreak in a high school there showed that there were no severe cases which required hospitalization. In addition, the 125 confirmed cases in Europe outside North America are mostly mild, and no death has been reported. In Singapore, there are still no human cases of influenza A (H1N1-2009).

3 After a careful review of the latest outbreak situation involving influenza A (H1N1-2009), MOH has decided to progressively downgrade our DORSCON Alert status from ORANGE to YELLOW beginning 7 May 09, and to reach full DORSCON YELLOW status by Monday, 11 May 09.

4 Please note that the infection control measures in TCM clinics are the same in both DORSCON Alert ORANGE and YELLOW as follows:

- a) Staff at triage to wear full PPE
- b) TCM practitioners to wear full PPE for high-risk patients
- c) Triage for flu/non-flu patients
- d) Declaration by patients
- e) Temperature taking for all patients



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ADVICE TO TCM PRACTITIONERS

5 The case definition for a suspected case of influenza A (H1N1-2009) virus infection is defined as an individual with an acute febrile respiratory illness (fever >38°C)¹ with onset of symptoms:

- a) Within 7 days of travel history to affected areas², or;
- b) Within 7 days of close contact with a person who is a probable case or a confirmed case of influenza A (H1N1-2009).

6 Any patient who meets the case definition in Paragraph 4 should be referred immediately to the Emergency Medicine Department at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. TCM practitioners should arrange for these patients to be transferred by ambulance by calling the dedicated ambulance service at **993** (available 24 hours).

7 The Ministry of Health should also be **notified immediately** of suspected cases. Please contact the Communicable Diseases Division at **98171463** (available 24 hours)³. MOH will inform the notifying TCM practitioner of the need for contact tracing and prophylaxis.

8 Recommendations on the management of patients with variable travel history and symptoms are at the following table:

Symptoms	Travel history (within the last 7 days)		
	Mexico ⁴	Other Affected Areas i.e. USA & Canada ²	Other countries with or without confirmed cases
Fever ⁵ + respiratory symptoms ⁶	Refer to TTSH	Refer to TTSH	Treat as per seasonal influenza ⁷
Fever only	Refer to TTSH	Refer to TTSH	Treat as per seasonal influenza
Respiratory symptoms only	Refer to TTSH	7 day monitoring for fever, symptomatic treatment, stay at home and observe good hygiene practices. Seek medical assistance if symptoms deteriorate.	Treat as per seasonal influenza
Nil	Remain under HQO	7 day monitoring for fever, observe good hygiene practices. No need to stay at home.	Not Applicable

¹ Persons who may not manifest fever include those on dialysis or immunosuppressive medications.

² Affected areas currently refer to the US, Canada and Mexico. Please refer to MOH website for the latest list of Affected Areas: <http://www.moh.gov.sg>

³ The hotline for Communicable Diseases Division, MOH is for notification of suspected cases of Influenza A(H1N1-2009). General enquiries should be directed to the MOH hotline numbers: **1800-225-4122**, or; **1800-333-9999**.

⁴ From 4 May 09, persons arriving in Singapore within 7 days after having departed Mexico will be issued a HQO.

⁵ **Fever** is defined as a temperature of >38°C, or a history of fever

⁶ **Respiratory symptoms** comprise symptoms such as sore throat, rhinorrhoea, cough and myalgia

⁷ Patients are to seek medical assistance if symptoms persist or worsen.

9 Please note that persons who return from other affected areas (besides Mexico), should be advised to monitor their temperature daily for fever for a period of 7 days after returning from the affected area, and to check for flu-like symptoms. They can continue with their regular activities but persons who develop fever or symptoms should seek medical assistance immediately.

CONTINUED VIGILANCE NEEDED

10 We will continue to maintain vigilance in preparation for a possible second, more severe, wave, and are prepared to raise the DORSCON level again if the character of the virus changes and becomes more virulent. The fight against an influenza pandemic will be a long drawn one. We seek your cooperation in our efforts to protect the health of people living in Singapore.

11 For updates on this evolving situation, please refer to the MOH website www.moh.gov.sg. For further clarifications of this circular, please email moh_info@moh.gov.sg or contact MOH hotline on 1800-333-9999.

12 If you are a TCM clinic manager/owner, please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of the relevant healthcare professionals in your clinic.



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