

## Ministry of Public Health

### Public Health Advice No.2 Subject: Outbreaks of Influenza A(H1N1)

.....

#### 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](http://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