

## Information for General Practitioners regarding H1N1 Influenza 09

As you would be aware, there have been over 1000 cases of newly emerged H1N1 influenza reported in Victoria to date. The majority of these cases are mild, although there have been a small number of patients with severe disease. We expect that many are presenting to you in general practice, which may present a significant challenge to you and your staff. Most patients will not need to be referred to hospital, and will be able to access treatment (if required) from pharmacies. Please find below some information which may be of assistance.

1. Otherwise healthy people with suspected influenza no longer require testing (even if they have a history of contact or travel), and they can obtain oseltamivir (for treatment and for prophylaxis of household contacts) free of charge via DHS 1300 651 160 if they meet the case definition (fever and two respiratory symptoms), are seen within 48 hours of symptom onset.
2. Patients who have influenza and comorbidities, such as those with chronic disease, pregnant women etc should be treated with oseltamivir. Household contacts should receive prophylactic oseltamivir via DHS.
3. Patients who are severely unwell (eg short of breath, significant chest pain, hypotension, confusion) should be referred to ED for assessment and treatment.
4. Influenza can sometimes look like other more serious diseases – such as meningococcal sepsis and community-acquired pneumonia – and this may be difficult to diagnose in the midst of the influenza epidemic.

If you have any clinical concerns about your patient, we would be happy to discuss this with you. The Alfred Emergency and Trauma GP hotline is 1 800 253 733.

### **Please note**

The Alfred is an adult hospital, and is not equipped to assess and manage large numbers of children. Our practice is to rapidly assess, stabilise and refer children on to a paediatric centre able to provide expert management in the most appropriate setting. Paediatric patients (under 16 years) should be managed in an institution where they can receive the appropriate care in a timely fashion. As such, it would be preferable to refer children and families (including adults and children with flu-like symptoms) directly to either Sandringham Hospital or Monash Medical Centre. If the child is the only affected family member, it is suggested that the parents should present their children to either these centres, or the Royal Children's Hospital. The Epworth also has an emergency department.

### **Some helpful websites:**

Latest advice from the Chief Medical Officer: [Australian Government Health Emergency website](#)

RACGP Pandemic Flu Kit and other resources: [RACGP website](#)

Advice for Health Professionals: [Victorian Government Health Information](#)