



Influenza A/H1N1 (“swine ‘flu”): protecting yourself and others

The following advice is from the Norfolk Island Government Task Force on A/H1N1 influenza (swine ‘flu).

One of the most effective ways to protect you, your family and friends from any form of influenza, including “swine ‘flu” is to practise good personal hygiene. Here are five simple ways to prevent the spread of any form of influenza:

1. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough

The ‘flu virus can travel through the air when a person coughs or sneezes. When you cough or sneeze you should:

- turn away from other people;
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve;
- use disposable tissues rather than a handkerchief (which could store the virus);
- put used tissues into the nearest bin, rather than a pocket or handbag; and
- wash your hands, or use an alcohol hand rub, as soon as possible afterwards.

If you are unwell with a cold or ‘flu, wear a surgical mask, where possible, to contain the virus and help prevent its spread.

2. Wash your hands

Washing your hands regularly - even when they aren't visibly dirty - with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based product that does not require water, is effective in killing the ‘flu virus. A variety of alcohol-based gels, rinses or foams are available at local supermarkets and pharmacies.

Always wash your hands:

- after you've been to the toilet;
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose;
- after being in contact with someone who has a cold or ‘flu;
- before touching your eyes, nose or mouth; and
- before preparing food and eating.

To wash your hands properly:



1 Wet your hands, then apply soap



2 Lather vigorously for 15-20 seconds



3 Rinse with water



4 Dry your hands afterwards with a clean towel

3. Don't share personal items

The 'flu virus can spread when someone touches an object which has the virus on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. If a person in your household has the 'flu:

- keep personal items, such as towels, bedding and toothbrushes separate; and
- do not share eating and drinking utensils, food or drinks.

4. Clean surfaces

Influenza viruses can live on surfaces for several hours. If someone in your house has the 'flu, regularly clean surfaces such as tables, benches, fridge doors and door knobs with soap and water or detergent.

5. Avoid close contact with others if you are unwell with 'flu

Keeping your distance by standing or sitting back at least one metre from other people will help reduce the chances of spreading the 'flu virus.

While you are unwell you should not go to work or school or attend other public or crowded gatherings. Preferably, you should remain at home. If you must go out of your home, try to wear a mask to contain the virus. Do not visit people who have the 'flu unless it is absolutely necessary.

If someone in your house has the 'flu, he or she should be separated from other family members, if possible, and wear a surgical mask or face covering if possible. If you are caring for someone who has the 'flu, you too should wear a mask and gloves when in close contact to protect yourself from catching the virus.

If you get sick:

- **Stay at home** and avoid contact with others as much as possible;
- **Rest** to allow your body to use its energy to fight the infection;
- **Drink plenty of fluids;**
- **Pain relief:** Take simple analgesics such as paracetamol;
- **Get medical advice:** If you are sick during an outbreak of swine 'flu it is advisable that in the first instance you contact with the Norfolk Island Hospital **by phone on 22091** rather than in person, to help reduce the spread of infection;
- **Do not smoke** as it irritates airways that are already damaged by the virus;
- **If there is an outbreak of swine 'flu:** Information about the availability of medications will be communicated widely by the Norfolk Island Government. These medications are most effective if taken within the first 24-48 hours of infection and can be prescribed by a doctor; and
- **Information:** Norfolk Island residents wanting to access the national A/H1N1 public hotline for information and advice can call the reverse charge number – **0061 8 84028833**.

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Main source: Australian Government Health
Emergency website www.healthemergency.gov.au