

From: Dr. Brian Davey, Director of UN Medical Services

MESSAGE TO ALL UN STAFF

20 May 2009

Since our last update to you, the new influenza A (H1N1) virus has continued to circulate globally, with daily increases in the number of persons affected. With the exception of the outbreak in Mexico, the H1N1 virus has mostly caused illness with a severity similar to seasonal flu. It is generally causing only mild illness in healthy people, but with more severe disease and some deaths reported in certain vulnerable groups (especially people with underlying long term medical conditions).

This pattern of international spread of the virus is expected to continue. Wide ranging actions have been already been taken by the United Nations to prepare for the impact of a pandemic. Comprehensive preparedness and response plans have been activated, and every effort is being made to ensure that the risk for staff is minimized, while maintaining crucial business functions.

As a consequence of the continued spread of illness, we fully expect that cases of H1N1 could occur among UN staff and their family members. We should not be unduly alarmed if this occurs, as the illness severity is likely to be no more severe than typical seasonal flu. We would like to remind all staff that the most effective way to reduce the risk of infection is to practice effective personal hygiene. This includes washing your hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue, avoiding close contact with sick people, and staying home when you're sick. These measures will help to keep people healthy and decrease the number of people around you who become ill.

Additional updated information on the influenza A (H1N1), including fact sheets and guidance, and a Pandemic information booklet, can be found on the UN Staff Pandemic Information Portal, <http://www.un.org/staff/pandemic/>

We will keep you updated as the situation evolves.