

5th May 2009, 5.00 pm

Dear All,

Human infections of influenza A (H1N1):

Perspective from WHO/Lao P.D.R. (update 7)

Highlights:

- 3 countries in the region have confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1).
- Globally, there are 1126 confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1)
- Stay informed: phase 5, advice on travel, vaccines and use of face masks
- You cannot get sick from eating pork as long as it is handled and cooked properly.
- **There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza**

What's new in the Western Pacific Region

- South Korea: first confirmed case
- Hong Kong: one confirmed case (announced 1 May)
- New Zealand: fourth confirmed case (announced 1 May)

Global situation

As 5 May 2009, 21 countries have officially reported 1126 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection.

Mexico has reported 590 confirmed human cases of infection, including 25 deaths. The increasing number of cases from Mexico particularly in the past 3 days mainly reflects testing of previously collected specimens. The United States Government has reported 279 laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Austria (1), Canada (140), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Columbia (1), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (4), Germany (8), Ireland (1), Israel (4), Italy (2), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (6), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (1), Spain (54), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (27).

Current level of influenza pandemic alert

Influenza pandemic alert remains at phase 5. Moving to Phase 6 is not thought to be imminent at this stage. *Phase 5 is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus in at least two countries in one WHO region.* The declaration of Phase 5 is a signal that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is now.

For further clarification about pandemic phases please read:

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html

Advice to travelers

WHO advises no restriction of regular travel or closure of borders. WHO emphasizes the need for individuals to protect themselves and others and strongly urges people who are ill to delay their travel plans. Returning travelers who are ill or become ill should seek appropriate medical care. There are no recommendations for screening at airports at this stage however countries may make decisions to implement entry/exit screening, if national resources permit.

Travel advice (1 May 2009):

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/guidance/public_health/travel_advice/en/index.html

Will currently available seasonal vaccine confer protection against Influenza A(H1N1)?

Current evidence, although incomplete, suggests that seasonal vaccines will confer little or no protection against Influenza A (H1N1). Recommendations remain however for certain high-risk groups to get seasonal influenza vaccine to protect them against seasonal influenza. Note also that the antiviral drug Tamiflu (also called oseltamivir) remains active against Influenza A (H1N1).

New Frequently Asked Questions about Vaccines (2 May 2009)

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/vaccine_preparedness/en/index.html

What are the recommendations for face masks?

If you are not sick, you do not have to wear a mask. If you are caring for a sick person, you should wear a mask. Masks should be clean and changed regularly. If you are sick, stay at home and avoid contact with people.

New guidance on face masks (1 May 2009):

<http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/Adviceusemaskcommunity.pdf>

What is the WHO Lao PDR country office doing?

There are no known *suspected* or *confirmed* human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Lao P.D.R. WHO has been providing technical assistance to the Governments response efforts which include the following:

- Enhanced daily surveillance for all 17 provinces coordinated through the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE). In Vientiane Capital, 6 hospitals will add to the this surveillance effort ensuring reporting and sampling of suspected cases as they arise with central hospital clinicians attending trainings today.
- Vientiane Municipality Health department yesterday conducted training on H1N1 surveillance, case detection and case management.
- Development of clinical management guidelines with consideration of limited Tamiflu supplies and limited availability of laboratory tests, especially in provincial areas. A clinicians working group has been set up and they will establish a hot line for clinical consultation.
- Passenger screening forms as the Lao government has decided to conduct passenger screening in the 2 international airports, Vientiane and Luang Prabang and additionally at the Friendship Bridge.

Where to get more information

During public health emergencies, it is important to seek accurate information about the situation. For official information on this evolving situation and for technical and communication guidance for health administrators, health professionals and the general public, please click on the following links:

WHO: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

US CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_001

France: http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere_minute/default.asp

In Lao PDR:

For the public:

National Avian and Human Influenza Coordination Office (NAHICO)
Hotline Telephone: 166

For technical queries:

National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE)

Hotline telephone: 021 350 209

World Health Organization - Lao PDR
Email*: commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int
Hotline Telephone: 020 514-1105

*This is a different email address that was issued in update 2. Please use this email address should you have any queries.

For general medical queries:

UN Dispensary Physician & Nurse

In the first instance please email:
Ivy Cabelles ivy.cabelles@undp.org
Ben.Burford ben.burford@undp.org

In the second instance please call: 021 267789 or 021 267788 **

**These phone numbers have been corrected from previous updates

For after hours medical emergencies for UN staff **only** please call: 020 559-9292
