



27 May 2009

The US CDC has updated their [interim recommendations for facemask and respirator use](#) to minimize the risk of H1N1 transmission. Overall, "Information on the effectiveness of facemasks and respirators for decreasing the risk of influenza infection in community settings is extremely limited." However the guidance recommends using a combination of measures, including personal hygiene, avoiding contact with others when sick, and using facemasks and respirators where appropriate. The difference between facemasks and respirators is explained.

The update focuses on the use of facemasks and respirators in a wider range of settings. Each setting is sub-divided into two groups for the "non-high risk" group and the group at "increased-risk" of severe influenza. The settings are:

- Community - only recommended for high risk people when they are unable to avoid a crowded setting in a community where H1N1 is circulating.
- Home - only recommended for someone who is at high risk who is caring for a person with influenza.
- Occupational (non-health care) - for all persons when influenza H1N1 is circulating in the community, when exposure to H1N1 can't be avoided.
- Occupational (health care) - respirator when caring for a flu patient.

The high risk group is defined as " groups at higher risk for severe illness from seasonal influenza, including: children younger than 5 years old; persons aged 65 years or older; children and adolescents [...] receiving long-term aspirin therapy [...]; pregnant women; adults and children who have pulmonary, including asthma, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders, such as diabetes; adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV); and, residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities."

Facemasks are recommended for confirmed, probable or suspected individuals with H1N1 when they are in public, or with others in the home setting, including when breastfeeding.

Influenza H1N1 update since May 26th, 2009.

NEWS ROUND UP

- Two more fatal cases reported in New York, USA.
- UK reported 47 cases in a day, authorities said almost all of them are related to localized clusters around affected schools in the West Midlands.
- Australia
 - Authorities divert cruise ship due to H1N1.
 - Nurses given the authority to administer antiviral medication for prevention in the state of Victoria.
- World Health Organization (WHO) Assistant Director General Dr. Keiji Fukuda set out plans to seek input from regional experts in revising the current WHO Pandemic Phases.

- United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - CDC updates interim recommendations for facemask and respirator use.
 - Spokesman Dr. Daniel Jernigan commented that candidate vaccines can likely be shipped to manufacturers by the end of May.

HUMAN CASES

Official WHO case count is 13,398 cases of influenza H1N1, in 48 countries, including 95 deaths.

NEW COUNTRIES REPORTING CASES

- Romania - a 30-year-old woman who lives in New York arrived in Romania
- Singapore - a 22-year-old female returned from New York
- Czech Republic - a 29-year-old traveler was infected while visiting New York

NEW CASES ELSEWHERE

Country	Number of New Cases	Newly Reported Deaths
Argentina	14	
Australia	20	
Bahrain	1	
Chile	12	
China	1	
Ecuador	4	
El Salvador	5	
Guatemala	1	
Hong Kong	2	
Israel	1	
Italy	4	
Japan	10	
Mexico	367	3

STORIES WE ARE WATCHING

(Our medical research team is verifying and analyzing these reports and where relevant will post updates on our website and in our daily email.)

Australia

- The federal health minister announced that the government was not planning to restrict domestic travel in wake of increasing number of H1N1 cases in the country.

China

- Around 29 Taiwanese nationals were quarantined at a hotel in Shanghai on suspicion of being infected with the H1N1 virus.

Russia

- Local media sources reported that a charter flight from the US, which arrived with five passengers and crew in the Chutokta region, was sent back by the authorities after one of the passengers was suspected of being infected with H1N1 virus.

US

- According to US health officials, the outbreak of H1N1 flu that emerged in Mexico and which is spreading worldwide now, may be subsiding. Though many states are still reporting new cases, there appears to be an overall decline in visits to doctors and hospitals by people with the infection.

Please remember to check out the latest on the newly integrated website
www.internationalsos.com/pandemicpreparedness.

The International SOS Pandemic Team

Worldwide reach Human touch