

## Information Sheet 2: Management of Flu

This is the second information sheet we are sending to people in our Bayside Community Options community. We will post out further communications to everyone if this is needed.

At the time of writing this information sheet there are confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza or Human Swine Flu in Queensland.

### A reminder.....

The best way to protect yourself and others from any type of flu is to:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand gel
- wash your hands prior to touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- when coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues which should be disposed of immediately
- don't share items such as cigarettes, glasses or cups, lipstick, toys or anything which could be contaminated with respiratory secretions
- maintain at least one metre distance from people who have flu-like symptoms such as coughing or sneezing – a social distance of 3 metres is preferable

**The most important infection control measure is for all of us, including you, to use good hand washing practices.** To wash your hands properly do this -



### It is sensible to make some plans.....

- Have plans in place if you and your family have to stay at home for a week or more.
- If you live alone, are single parents with children or the only person caring for a frail or disabled person, think of some one you could call upon for help if you become very ill with the flu. Discuss with the person what help you might need and how that could best be provided
- Put the phone number of your family doctor in a prominent place
- Think of the supplies you might need
- Think of some one who could help you with food or other supplies if you or your family were sick and could not leave the house. Some supermarkets offer home deliveries.



## **Bayside Community Options Inc.**

Telephone: (07) 3269 1915

PO Box 1131, Nathan Street Post Office, Brighton Qld 4017

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**H1N1 Influenza or Human Swine Flu** symptoms are similar to those of seasonal influenza, including:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue

Some people have also reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with Human Swine Flu. Like seasonal flu, Human Swine Flu can vary in severity from mild to severe.

### **What to do if you have any concerns about flu symptoms.....**

- Talk to your general practitioner by phone or call 13 Health (13 43 25 84)
- Follow instructions including taking medicine as prescribed
- The Department of Health and Aging has set up a Swine Influenza Hotline 1802007
- You should remain at home and avoid going out in public
- Rest until your temperature returns to normal. Rest allows your body to use its energy to fight the infection.
- Drink a glass of water or juice every hour while you are awake to replace fluids lost through fever.
- Gargle with a glass of warm water to ease a sore throat. Sugarless lollies or lozenges may also help and some medications, such as benzocaine, work by numbing the throat.
- Use saline nose drops or spray to help soothe or clear a stuffed nose. Talk to your doctor or chemist about suitable treatment.
- A cough can be helpful if it gets rid of mucus. If a dry cough keeps you awake or you need help to loosen mucus from the chest or lungs talk to your doctor or chemist about suitable treatment.
- Do not smoke as it is irritating to airways that are already damaged by virus

At present two commercial antivirals have been developed – Tamiflu and Relenza – as medication in cases of possible Human Swine Flu. A doctor's diagnosis and prescription are needed to make sure these medications are used safely and effectively. Antivirals should be administered within the first 24-48 hours of the infection, are not 100% effective and may have side effects.

People with Human Swine Influenza should be considered potentially contagious as long as they have symptoms and possibly up to seven (7) days following the onset of the illness. Children, especially younger children, might be contagious for longer periods



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### **The Department of Health and Aging provides this advice if a child is sick:**

- **Children under 18 years of age should not take medications containing aspirin.**  
The combination of influenza and aspirin in children has been known to cause Reye's syndrome, a very serious condition affecting the nervous system and liver. It is important for parents of children who need to regularly take medications containing aspirin for a health problem to discuss the possible complications associated with influenza with their doctor, and find out what they can do to reduce the risk. Your chemist can provide advice on appropriate "over the counter" medications for reducing fever.
- Dress them in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature at about 20 degrees Celsius if possible.
- Offer cool fluids frequently when the child is awake.
- Allow children to rest and stay at home until they are no longer infectious, so the virus isn't spread to other children.
- Use salt-water nose drips to treat a stuffy nose. Throw tissues in a bin as soon as you have wiped your child's nose.
- Teach children to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often and teach your children or grand children to do the same

### **We suggest you dispose of the previous information sheet we sent out and keep Information Sheet 2**

For any further information and assistance, please ring Bayside Community Options on **32691915 or on the mobile phone 0408691929**. In the event of an outbreak of Human Swine Influenza in this area, staff at Bayside Community Options may operate from home using mobile phones. It is likely that all group programs and staff meetings would be cancelled. Depending on the health and availability of our Support Workers, we may also have to prioritise people for services and limit the types of services we provide. Our aims would be to provide essential services to people who are isolated and to remain in telephone contact with you.

Copies of all our Information Sheets are under **Resources and Links** on our web site [www.bcocare.org](http://www.bcocare.org)