



# cover your cough

## INFLUENZA UPDATE

Dear Parent/Carer

As expected, the number of people in Tasmania who have influenza (flu) is going up.

Most flu is currently being caused by the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus ("swine flu") and it's likely there are children affected in every school and many child care centres. If your child has flu-like symptoms (fever with a cough and/or sore throat), assume they have pandemic influenza.

**Most children will not need to see a doctor**, will **not** need to be tested and will **not** need treatment, other than paracetamol (e.g. Panadol, Panamax, Herron, Tylenol) as directed, and other flu medicines you can buy without needing to see a doctor.

**If your child has a flu-like illness and you think they need to see a doctor**, phone 1800 358 362 (1800 FLU DOC). You will be put through to a specially-trained nurse who will be able to assess your child over the phone and tell you what to do, including whether to go to your normal doctor, a Flu Clinic or hospital if necessary. Please tell the nurse about any underlying health problems your child has.

**If your child has a flu-like illness and they are at risk of severe illness** (see list over the page), see a doctor as soon as possible. Antiviral medication may be provided to help your child get better quickly, but must be started within 48 hours (2 days) of the start of illness to work properly. Phone your normal doctor or 1800 358 362.

Some people who get sick with pandemic influenza have a severe illness. Please help protect others by keeping your sick child home and *away from anyone at risk of severe illness* for a full **7 days**. Pandemic influenza spreads very easily.

For more information and to stay informed, please visit [www.pandemic.tas.gov.au](http://www.pandemic.tas.gov.au) or phone 1800 358 362.

Yours sincerely



Dr Chrissie Pickin, 31 July, 2009  
Acting Director of Public Health

### REMEMBER:

**FEVER + COUGH or SORE THROAT = STAY HOME 7 DAYS.**

## PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK OF SEVERE ILLNESS FROM INFLUENZA

- Pregnant women (particularly in the middle and later months of pregnancy)
- People with long-term respiratory (breathing) conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or who take daily medications to prevent asthma
- People who are very obese
- People with other long-term conditions, including heart, kidney, liver or metabolic disease, diabetes, chronic neurological conditions or weakened immunity (for example due to cancer, HIV/AIDS or medication)
- Indigenous people of any age (because many Indigenous Australians have underlying health problems).

If you or your child is at high risk of severe illness, **seek medical care early** for a **fever** with a cough and/or sore throat. Antivirals *may* be provided, but must be started within 48 hours of the start of illness to work properly.

## PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF SEVERE ILLNESS FROM INFLUENZA

- Smokers
- People who have sleep apnoea
- Women in the first three months of pregnancy
- Children under five.

If you (or your child) are in this group, phone 1800 358 362 (1800 FLU DOC) if you are worried about how sick you are.

## REMEMBER THE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

					
Always cover your cough.	Wash your hands often.	Keep a large step from others in public.	Know the signs: fever, cough, sore throat.	Stay home if you're sick, for 7 days.	Phone 1800 358 362 if you are worried about how sick you are.



**Need an interpreter?** Phone TIS (131 450) and ask TIS to call 1800 358 362.