

# MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday 22 May 2009

## **Influenza A (H1N1) planning being taken seriously by Lakes and Bay of Plenty DHBs**

Despite a low number of cases in the BOP/Lakes region, local DHBs remain vigilant in the face of potential escalation of the H1N1 Influenza A spread.

In the Lakes and Bay of Plenty areas there is currently one suspected case and two contacts. These people are in isolation and have been offered Tamiflu. Toi Te Ora Public Health and Medical Officers of Health, who manage suspected cases of Influenza A (H1N1) and contacts are working closely with both DHBs and are involved in the joint Lakes/Bay of Plenty Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

The joint EOC has been set up for the past four weeks. EOC Incident Controller Gail Bingham says a significant amount of work is being done by staff at both DHBs to ensure Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs are as prepared as possible.

“The focus of the work now is on ensuring our hospitals are prepared for a potential increase in cases. Staff in both DHBs are also looking at setting up Community Based Assessment Centres (CBACS) and planning is well underway to ensure these can be established quickly if needed,” she says.

Ministry of Health National health coordinator Steve Brazier praised DHB efforts in containing the spread of the Influenza. With 41 countries affected and more than 10,000 cases reported worldwide, New Zealand has reported only nine cases so far. Expert’s opinions at this stage are that the new Influenza A (H1N1) virus is very infectious, however generally it is causing mild to moderate symptoms.

“It is really important that we remind people to follow the normal precautions to stop the spread of any virus such as thorough hand washing, covering mouths when coughing or sneezing and safe disposal of used tissues,” says Gail.

Members of the public who have any concerns regarding Influenza A (H1N1) should contact Healthline (0800 611 116).

ENDS

**Issued on behalf of Incident Controller for Joint Lakes and Bay of Plenty  
Pandemic Planning Committee, Gail Bingham**

## **Recommended Measures to Help Prevent the Spread of Flu**

1. Wash your hands
  - a. By washing your hands with soap under warm running water, you will reduce your chance of getting the flu.
  - b. Alcohol-based hand gel can also be used if soap and water are not readily available. It's a good idea to keep some with you in your pocket or purse when you travel.
2. Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette.
  - a. Cover your mouth and/or nose to reduce the spread of germs. Remember to wash your hands afterwards.
3. Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
4. Cover your mouth and nose to reduce the spread of germs. Remember to wash your hands afterwards.
5. Monitor your health.
6. If you develop flu-like symptoms when you return to New Zealand, you should seek medical attention immediately. Ring first if possible.
7. Tell the health care provider who sees you that you have been travelling to North America and/or Mexico.

### **For more information contact:**

**Carol Wollaston, Communications Manager BOP DHB**  
**Ph: 07 579 8411 mob: 021 227 0452**

**Sue Wilkie Communications Officer Lakes DHB**  
**or Shan Tapsell, Assistant Communications Officer**  
**Phone 07 349 7944 or mobile 027 242 3652**