

Date: 29 June 2012

**Public Health Alert  
from the Medical Officer of Health**

## **Influenza advice for residential and health care facilities in the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Wairarapa**

Regional Public Health was advised yesterday of one confirmed influenza outbreak and one suspected influenza like illness outbreak in the area. Laboratory results are pending and we will update you when we have further information. The following advice may assist you:

**Influenza Vaccination:** Encourage all unvaccinated staff and residents to be vaccinated.

**Hand Hygiene:** Put up posters to remind staff and visitors about hand hygiene, provide alcohol hand gel at points of entry and ask visitors with symptoms not to visit while unwell

### **Has this person got 'flu (influenza-like illness)?**

Influenza-like illness is:

**FEVER :** Temp greater than 38°C or a history of chills/sweats, **however remember that in the elderly and frail temperature may only be minimally raised or not at all,**

with COUGH or SORE THROAT

The elderly may have mild or less typical symptoms so encourage staff to report changes in usual behaviour – **if in doubt, talk to your GP.**

Seek medical advice early: Antiviral medication (oseltamivir) as treatment has restricted benefit, unless started within 24 hours of symptom onset. Watch for and treat secondary bacterial infections.

### **Suspected 'flu outbreak**

Droplet precautions apply when caring for people with influenza like illness. This means staff wear a surgical mask in the room, (the mask should be removed outside of the room and put in a yellow bag for clinical waste) frequent use of hand gel and frequent surface cleaning. Gloves are necessary when cleaning up blood or body fluids including sputum.

- Isolate unwell residents that are in single rooms: use droplet precautions, have dedicated staff
- If the unwell person is in a shared room they should be moved to isolation if possible and the other residents should be closely observed for signs of ILI.
- Ensure everyone (staff, residents and visitors) have good hand hygiene and practise cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Notify Public Health if you suspect an outbreak.\*
- Start a sickness log.
- Put up a sign on the front door advising of 'flu in the facility.
- Keep staff, residents and families informed.

## Unwell staff

- Ask the staff member to practice cough etiquette and to go home as soon as possible.
- Staff should remain at home until they have no significant symptoms or their doctor feels they are no longer infectious.

## Provide information

Promote messages about preventing the spread of 'flu and the importance of vaccination. If you would like written resources on influenza, standard precautions, hand hygiene etc to display or give to staff and residents please call 04 570 9002 and ask for the resource centre.

### **\*Call Regional Public Health if you think you may have an ILI outbreak**

- 3 staff or residents unwell with influenza-like illness within 48 hours; or,
- 4 staff or residents within seven days

Phone 04 570 9002 - let us know you're calling from a rest home or care facility with a suspected outbreak so you can be directed the correct person.

### **For specific Community Infection Prevention and Control advice contact:**

CCDHB	Carolyn Clissold James Robertson Viv McEnnis Donna Ashton	04 9186515 or 027 292 8031 04 3855999 extn 6613 or 027 297 2446 04 3855999 extn 6514 or 027 297 2813
Hutt Valley DHB	Jane Pryer Sarah Harris	04 570 9405 04 570 9069
Wairarapa DHB	Lizzy Daniels Suzy Rogers	06 946 9800 06 946 9800

Kind regards



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