



Influenza A H1N1 Pandemic FAQs for Carers

Keeping staff and clients safe is Mclsaac Caregiving Agency's first priority

What is the Influenza A H1N1 pandemic?

When a new flu virus infects many people around the world, it is called influenza pandemic. A pandemic must be taken seriously because of its capacity to spread rapidly. However the World Health Organisation (WHO) has also advised that even though there is officially now a pandemic it does not mean that this influenza is particularly severe. In fact the symptoms are reportedly mild.

What is the NZ Ministry of Health doing?

The Ministry of Health (MOH) alert code is now code red. This means that they are still focusing on border control and isolation of confirmed or suspect cases in order to reduce the numbers of people contracting H1N1 at any one time. It also means that there are some cases now where people have contracted Influenza A H1N1 without being in contact with an overseas carrier.

What is Mclsaac Caregiving Agency doing?

Mclsaac Caregiving Agency has activated its pandemic plan. Our first priority is to safeguard the wellbeing of our workforce and clients while ensuring that our essential services continue.

How do I know if I have influenza?

Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Fever/Chills	Common	Uncommon
Aches and Pains	Common and severe; prominent headache	Mild, headaches rare
Cough	Common	Less common, mild/moderate
Tiredness	Common and severe	Mild
Sudden Onset	Sudden	Gradual

If you have any of these symptoms you should not go to work. The usual sick leave policy applies. The MOH recommend that if you are concerned that you may have Influenza A H1N1 or have come in contact in the last 7 days with someone who may have it you should called the MOH Healthline 0800 611 116 or call your GP.

In terms of the usual Mclsaac sick leave policy you should:

- Contact your Team Leader and Area Supervisor to let them know that you are unwell.
- Fill out a sick leave form and post or fax it to Head Office : Fax 09 4144 570
Mclsaac Caregiving Agency Ltd, PO Box 302437, North Harbour, North Shore City 0751
- If you are away for 3 or more days please post or fax to Head Office your medical certificate. (You may be able to ask your GP to fax it directly to us).
- Your sick leave payment will be processed the next payday after all these documents have been received.
- Remember that unlike sick leave forms, which can be sent directly to the Head Office, planned annual leave requests must still go to your Area Supervisor first for approval.



What do I do if I have been asked to stay in isolation by the MOH or my GP?

The usual sick leave policy applies. You may use any sick leave you have or annual leave entitlements. Please contact your Area Supervisor to discuss and fill out the leave forms as required.

What happens if the client I work with has a confirmed or suspected case of Influenza A H1N1?

The MOH has recommended that a client's usual care can be provided. Carers will perform the usual standard infection control precautions. When working in close contact (within 1 meter) of a client with symptoms the carer will be required to wear a mask and gloves. Where possible the client should also wear a mask.

Where do the masks and gloves come from?

The company is in the process of purchasing appropriate health safety equipment, which will be delivered to your Area Supervisor for distribution.

How is Influenza A H1N1 passed on?

By sneezing, coughing or when people pick up the virus from their hands.

What can I do to reduce the risk of getting or spreading Influenza A H1N1?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water particularly after you cough or sneeze. If you are working in a house with Flu symptoms, use the hand sanitizer supplied by the company.
- You should minimize your contact with other people initially to avoid spreading the virus.
- You should cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then dispose of the tissue immediately into a rubbish bin.
- Wear a mask and gloves when working closely with clients who are suspected or confirmed cases.

What if I decide not to work with a client who may have Influenza A H1N1?

If you decide not to work the normal rules of leave will apply. This may include leave without pay or annual leave. Please contact your Areas Supervisor.

Where do I get more information?

The best source of information is the Ministry of Health.

Healthline 0800 611 116

Website www.moh.govt.nz

On the World Health Organisation website www.who.int/en

Mclsaac Caregiving Agency will provide you with updates in writing, on our website www.mcisaac.co.nz or through your Area Supervisor.

In order to ensure that all carers feel confident with Mclsaac Caregiving's infection control procedures the Area Supervisors will cover this topic in Team Meetings over the next few months. Mclsaac Caregiving Agency has taken a proactive approach to managing the Influenza A H1N1 pandemic. We hope that the procedures we have in place may help to reduce any significant impact to our clients and staff.