

WorkSafe ACT

Swine Flu

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The following links may be of assistance in dealing with responding to the H1N1 Influenza (or Swine Flu):

- The Australian Government's [Department of Health and Ageing](#)
- The ACT Government's [ACT Health site](#)
- The Australian Government's dedicated swine-flu website - [Health Emergency](#)
- the [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO)
- the [Health Services Australia site](#).

The symptoms for 'swine flu' will be the same as for other influenza viruses, including:

- fever
- sore throat
- cough
- headache
- muscle aches and pains.

To prepare your workplace, the guide recommends that employers:

1. Keep informed and up-to-date on pandemic information.
2. Educate and keep workers up to date.
3. Undertake OHS risk management by managing the direct and indirect risks.
4. Incorporate OHS preparations and risk control measures into a business continuity plan.
5. Review and evaluate risk control measures.
6. Plan and manage the recovery phase of a pandemic.

On 26 June 2009, ACT Health advised that their Influenza Assessment Centres had been set up to assist in their goal of reducing the spread of Influenza by assessing and treating people who may be feeling unwell with respiratory symptoms.

People with symptoms should make an appointment before attending an Influenza Assessment Centre.

Bookings can be made by calling *healthdirect* 24 hours-a-day on 1800 022 222. You will be assessed over the phone and, if necessary, an appointment will be made for you to attend an Influenza Assessment Centre. People concerned that they have influenza may also be referred to a Centre by a GP.

In the PROTECT phase, which Australia is currently in, only symptomatic people with moderate or severe symptoms or with identified risk factors will be provided with antiviral treatment. The PROTECT phase of the national response was announced on 17 June 2009. The current focus is to protect vulnerable members of our community from severe consequences of this new disease while acknowledging that, fortunately, swine flu is mild in most people. Vulnerable groups include pregnant women, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and those with chronic respiratory and other conditions that may reduce immunity.

ACT Health advise that the average person working in an office or trade environment is not at any particular risk of becoming infected with this virus. As always, if you are unwell, particularly if you are coughing or sneezing, you should stay away from work until symptoms resolve.

Those who are in vulnerable groups may need to be more vigilant if working in, or attending, health-care settings. The Communicable Diseases Network Australia has prepared guidelines "H1Ni Guidance for Health Care workers at increased risk of complications" available at www.healthemergency.gov.au (click on [Health Professionals](#) and scroll down until you see this title.) If you need to, you should discuss your personal situation with your supervisor.

We can all minimise the risk of infection by sound hygiene practices including regular hand-washing and cough and sneeze etiquette.