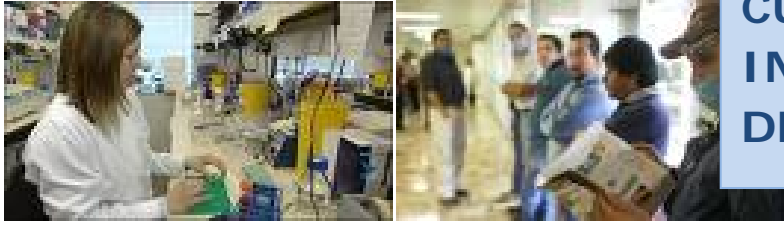


## IOE INFORMATION TO MEMBERS ON THE CURRENT SWINE INFLUENZA A (H1N1) DEVELOPMENTS



### Keep informed of developments nationally

The situation is developing rapidly and is different from country to country. Employers should keep informed of the national developments and can play their part in cooperating with the authorities and providing information to their workforce. Some countries have provided public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures. But check with your authorities so that you support current best practice and avoid overreaction.

### What employers can advise at present

- ✓ Anyone who is ill should not come to work and if they become ill at work they should seek medical attention. They should not return until their condition has been diagnosed and treated.
- ✓ Support and reinforce the national communications campaigns and advise employees to follow good hygiene practices. These will help to slow the spread of the virus and will be the single most effective thing individuals can do to protect themselves and others from infection.

#### People should

- ✓ Always carry tissues.
- ✓ Use clean tissues to cover their mouths and noses when they cough and sneeze.
- ✓ Bin the tissues after one use.
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and hot water or a sanitiser gel often.

### THE SLOGAN **CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT** SUMMARISES THIS.

- ✓ The World Health Organisation (WHO) headquartered here in Geneva currently advises no restriction of regular travel or closure of borders. It is considered prudent for people who are ill to delay international travel and for people developing symptoms following international travel to seek medical attention, in line with guidance from national authorities.

1 May 2009

For further information contact [asherson@ioe-emp.org](mailto:asherson@ioe-emp.org)

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Symptoms of swine flu**

Some of the symptoms are the sudden onset of fever, cough or shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles, chills, sneezing, runny nose or loss of appetite. These symptoms can also occur for other reasons and should be checked by the medical authorities

### **A balanced approach**

Because it's a new virus, no one will have immunity to it and everyone could be at risk of catching it. This includes healthy adults as well as older people, young children and those with existing medical conditions.

Flu viruses are made up of tiny particles that can be spread through the droplets from sneezing or coughing. They can be transferred from hand to any hard surfaces that are touched and since they can live on those surfaces for some time they can be spread by contact.

Many countries have been stockpiling antiviral drugs for use in this situation. They are not a cure, but they help recovery if taken within 48 hours of symptoms developing, by:

- ✓ Relieving some of the symptoms.
- ✓ Reducing the length of time of illness by around one day.
- ✓ Reducing the potential for serious complications, such as pneumonia

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent flu as each vaccine has to be specific to the virus and these are constantly mutating.

There is also no risk of infection from this virus from consumption of well-cooked pork and pork products.

### **Guidance on Protecting Your Employees and Business from Pandemic Human Influenza**

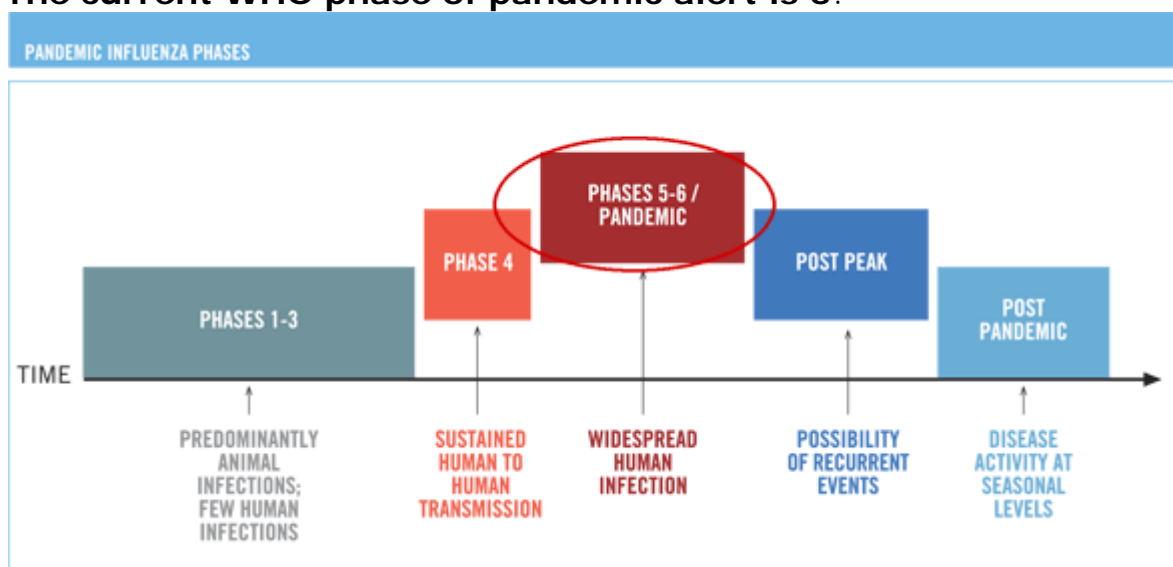
Following the previous outbreaks of influenza an ILO project in Thailand led to the development of an Action manual for small and medium-sized enterprises. It contains much useful information that can be adapted to the current situation and can be downloaded in pdf format from [http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS\\_101422/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_101422/index.htm).

## The international coordination

WHO is coordinating the global response to human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) and monitoring the corresponding threat of an influenza pandemic. Information on the website <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html> is tracking the evolving situation and provides access to both technical guidelines and information useful for the general public.

The WHO have identified that we are currently at phase 5. For what this means in relation to the progression of a pandemic see [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html)

**The current WHO phase of pandemic alert is 5.**



The situation continues to evolve rapidly. As of 17:00 GMT, 30 April 2009, 11 countries have officially reported 257 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection. The United States Government has reported 109 laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death. Mexico has reported 97 confirmed human cases of infection, including seven deaths. The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Austria (1), Canada (19), Germany (3), Israel (2), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (3), Spain (13), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (8).

---