



To : Editors & Health Journalists

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Health authorities are monitoring the influenza season in South Africa

The Department of Health and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) are monitoring increased seasonal influenza activity currently being reported in several provinces across South Africa. It is currently the winter influenza season, which occurs yearly. This year's influenza season includes cases of influenza A(H1N1) pdm09, previously referred to as "swine flu". We are also seeing cases of influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B.

Influenza A(H1N1) pdm09 is now recognised globally as one of the regular seasonal influenza strains that circulate each year and management is the same as for other seasonal influenza strains. For healthy individuals, the illness is mild to moderate and can be safely managed at home with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medication.

Common symptoms of influenza may include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle and body aches, fatigue and runny or blocked nose. Many people recover fully within a few days to a week without requiring hospitalisation or antiviral treatment. However, certain groups are at higher risk of severe illness or complications. These include pregnant women, older persons, young children, and individuals with underlying medical conditions such as HIV, TB, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or chronic lung disease.

People in these high-risk groups are encouraged to seek medical attention early if they develop flu symptoms, particularly if they experience difficulty breathing, chest pain, dehydration, persistent fever, or worsening illness.

The NICD continues to strongly recommend annual influenza vaccination as the most effective way to reduce the risk of severe disease and hospitalisation. Vaccination is especially important for vulnerable groups and healthcare workers.

The public can also help reduce the spread of influenza by practising simple everyday prevention measures such as:

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or bent elbow
- Stay home when sick to avoid infecting others
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Ensure indoor spaces are well ventilated where possible

The Department and the NICD will continue to monitor influenza trends through national surveillance systems.

Weekly updates on influenza and other circulating respiratory viruses such as RSV, COVID-19, and pertussis are available from the NICD. Click [here](#) to visit the page.

For more information on public health, visit the NICD website [here](#).

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For enquiries and interview requests, please contact: Media@nicd.ac.za.

Vuyo Sabani: Senior Communications Manager

National Institute for communicable Diseases