

ADVICE SHEET |

Influenza A (H1N1) V



Symptoms

According to the HSE, symptoms for children under the age of 5 are:

- Bluish skin colour.
- Not drinking enough fluids.
- Not waking or not interacting.
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing.
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held.
- Flu like symptoms improve but then return with a fever and worse cough.
- Fever and rash.

If you are in any doubt call your GP or local HSE Area or the 24 hour Information Line [1800941100](tel:1800941100).

Prevention

Hand Washing

This is an effective way of preventing the spread of illness. Wash hands thoroughly in warm water with soap and/or use alcohol-based hand rub. All staff, volunteers, parents, visitors and children must clean their hands on arrival to the childcare service. Consider using alcohol-based rub at the entrances to all rooms if hand washing facilities aren't available.

Nose blowing/sneezing/coughing

All staff and children should use disposable tissues and they should be disposed of in a closed bin immediately. This should be followed by hand washing.

Hygiene

All services should abide by their normal cleaning schedules in accordance with the pre-school regulations. The virus can survive on hard surfaces or hard toys for up to 24 hours. The cleaning and sanitation routine should be increased during the virus outbreak.

Toys/equipment

All services should abide by their normal toy/equipment cleaning schedules. Children must clean their hands after carpet play.

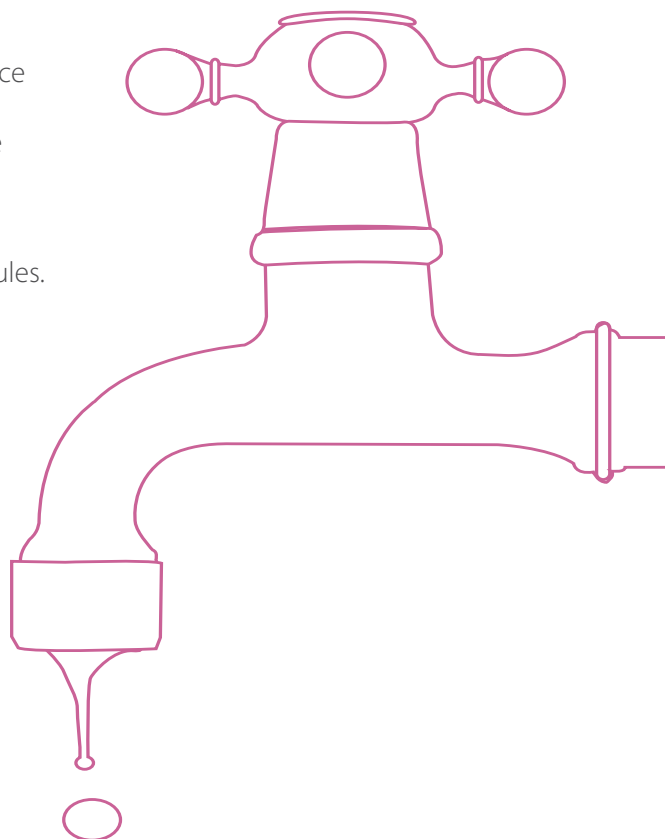
Shoes in infant's room

Staff may wear slippers or indoor shoes as children under two are in the high risk category of contracting swine flu.

Policies & Procedure

Services may need to amend their policies to include a specific policy regards Influenza A (H1N1)v. You can contact SDCCC if you require advice in developing this policy.

Children, Staff, Parents, volunteers, and visitors should not attend the service if they are ill.



Communication

Inform parents of the services policies and procedures against the spread of Influenza A (H1N1) v.

Encourage children in an age appropriate way to practice good personal hygiene (hand washing, coughing, sneezing etc). It is important not to scare young children. Display posters on good hygiene practices for all parents, staff and visitors to see. Check that parents can access information in their own language if required. Keep parents informed in relation to any suspected cases of the virus whilst adhering to your confidentiality policy.

Ideas: Use pictures to visualize the steps involved e.g. hand, water, soap, water, paper towel etc.

Suspected Cases

- All staff should be able to recognize symptoms of influenza A (H1N1)v.
- If a service has a child in the service with suspected Influenza A (H1N1)v.
- The service must monitor the child's illness and keep written records.
- The child's parent/carer must be contacted immediately.
- Follow the procedure for caring for a sick child.
- Isolate the child from other children with a member of staff and discourage visitors from coming into the area/room. Leave the door open.
- Contact either the Flu information line, GP or HSE for immediate advice.
- Follow the professional opinion for the next course of action.
- The HSE are advising that people with Influenza A (H1N1)v. or those caring for people with Influenza A (H1N1)v. stay at home for up to 7 days or until they are fully recovered.
- When the child has gone home, ensure the room used for the isolation is thoroughly cleaned before the next use.
- The staff member who cared for the child must follow the hygiene guidelines.

Actions required if case suspected in the service

- Remove all soft toys except comfort toys.
- Water/sand play can be continued provided hand washing takes place before and after play.
- Do not let children share wind instruments.
- To avoid mouthing of pencils, crayons, markers etc provide each child with a set clearly marked with their name.
- The cleaning and sanitation routine should be increased.

Confirmed Cases

Childcare services should have an emergency plan in the event that a child or staff member has been confirmed with influenza A (H1N1)v.

The Department of Public Health may consider closure of the service if there is a concern about the potential spread of the virus.

Further information

www.hpsc.ie

www.hse.ie

www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html

www.southdublinchildcare.ie / ph: 014570122

