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**United Nations Medical Directors’**

**Risk Mitigation Plan for Influenza**

**Recommendations for UN Personnel**

**24 APRIL 2023**

* The following occupational health recommendations are provided by the UN Medical Directors to all UN Organizations and apply to all UN personnel to reduce the risk of UN personnel acquiring influenza.
* This RMP applies to seasonal, zoonotic (e.g., avian, swine influenza) and pandemic influenza.
* The main symptoms of influenza, an acute viral respiratory illness, include; fever, cough, myalgia/arthralgias, and headaches. Gastrointestinal symptoms can also occur, especially in children. It’s important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.
* Illness can range from mild symptoms to severe illness and death.
* **All duty stations should take into account the local host country/authorities’ guidance and regulations when implementing these recommendations.**
* Contact [dos-dhmosh-public-health@un.org](mailto:dos-dhmosh-public-health@un.org) for more information.

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|  | **Risk Categories** | **UN Medical Directors’ Recommendations** |
| **1** | **All UN personnel** | * Be aware of the local influenza epidemiological situation in their duty station. * Follow the following measures recommended by [WHO](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)):   + Strict adherence to regular hand hygiene.   + Respiratory hygiene – covering mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing, using tissues and disposing of them correctly.   + Early self-isolation if you feel unwell or have a fever or other symptoms of influenza.   + Avoid close contact with sick people.   + Avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth. * Get the yearly influenza vaccine. * Ensure you are up-to-date with routine vaccinations including COVID-19 vaccination. |
| **2** | **UN personnel with risk factors for severe disease or complications** | * Risk factors for severe disease or complications include:   + Pregnant women or those that are two weeks postpartum.   + Children under 59 months, particularly those under two years of age.   + Those over 65 years of age.   + Individuals with chronic medical conditions, including chronic cardiac, pulmonary, renal, metabolic, neurodevelopmental, liver, or haematological diseases, and those with immunosuppressive conditions (e.g., HIV/AIDS, receiving chemotherapy or steroids, or malignancy).   + Influenza can cause severe illness or death, especially in people at high risk * Healthcare workers (in the absence of personal protective equipment use). * UN personnel with risk factors for severe disease or complications should:   + Ensure they have received their yearly influenza vaccine as well as routine vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccination.   + Seek medical care if they develop symptoms of influenza for possible early treatment. |
| **3** | **UN personnel who are pregnant or breastfeeding** | * See section 2 above:   + Ensure they have received their yearly influenza vaccine as well as routine vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccination.   + Seek medical care if they develop symptoms of influenza for possible early treatment. |
| **4** | **UN managers who approve travel / UN personnel who are travelling or plan to travel** | * There are no travel or trade restrictions for UN personnel who are travelling to areas where influenza cases are circulating. \*\* Except where the local health authorities mandated such restrictions. Please check the guidelines of the local health authority prior to travel. * Travelers to countries with known outbreaks of avian influenza should, if possible, avoid poultry farms and contact with animals in live poultry markets, entering areas where poultry may be slaughtered, and contact with any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with faeces from poultry or other animals. Good food safety and hygiene practices should be followed, e.g. hand washing with soap and water. |
| **5** | **Contacts of individuals with influenza** | * Contacts of individuals who have influenza are at high risk of contracting influenza as well (particularly if they are not vaccinated). * The incubation period is short (1-4 days). * No formal quarantine or isolation is mandated for contacts of cases with influenza, though this may change in the context of zoonotic influenza or pandemic influenza if advised by public health authorities**.** * In some instances, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with oseltamivir may be indicated (e.g. during outbreaks). |
| **6** | **UN healthcare workers (HCWs)** | * Ensure they have received their yearly influenza vaccination. * Ensure standard precautions are used for all patients at all times, including droplet precautions and contact precautions. Airborne precautions should be added for those with aerosol-generating procedures. * Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be made available and used at all times. * Diagnostic testing for influenza (with PCR or RDT testing) should be done to confirm the diagnosis. Should also test for COVID-19 and co-infections. * Be familiar with the [WHO clinical management guidelines](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/352453) for those with severe illness or with risk factors for severe illness or complications:   + Oseltamivir is the drug of choice for treatment and should be started as soon as possible.   + Adjunctive therapy such as corticosteroids, passive immune therapy or macrolide antibiotics are not recommended.   + If secondary bacterial pneumonia is present, then this should be treated with appropriate antibiotics. |
| **7 UN personnel with confirmed or probable influenza** | | * Self-isolate from others when feeling unwell to limit the spread of the disease. * Most people can stay home until they are feeling better. * Those who are at risk of severe illness or with risk factors for severe illness or complications should seek medical care for consideration of oseltamivir and admission/monitoring, including oxygen therapy. |

For more information:

WHO influenza clinical management guidelines: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/352453>

WHO influenza factsheet: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)>

WHO influenza (avian and other zoonotic): <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(avian-and-other-zoonotic)>