

National Influenza Committee Guidelines for Cash Handlers

Past Guidelines in the series are available at...

<http://stlucia.gov.lc/flu/guidelines.htm>

Saint Lucia National Influenza Plan is available at www.tiny.cc/nip

This document provides interim guidance on suggested means to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. Recommendations are interim based on current knowledge of the H1N1 outbreak, and may be revised as more information becomes available.

Background

In May 2009 the World Health Organisation designated H1N1 as a "*Public Health Emergency of International Concern*" and the virus has lived up to its description. As the National Flu Committee deepens its response to this flu, Saint Lucians are called upon to partner with the Committee.

The risk of transmission of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus may be spread due to increased proximity and sometimes prolonged contact between people in an enclosed environment.

This guidance will address general recommendations that apply to all programs and some specific guidance that applies to programs that are residential.



At this time, CDC recommends the primary means to reduce spread of influenza focuses on early identification of the ill. This includes the cooperation of all by staying home and away from others (including pets) when ill, conducting good cough and hand hygiene etiquette, and environmental controls that encourage use of these hygiene practices.

Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

The symptoms of influenza usually include fever plus at least either cough or sore throat. These symptoms are often referred to as an influenza-like illness (ILI). Influenza infection can also lead to additional symptoms like headache, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, chills, diarrhea, and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, novel influenza A (H1N1) infection in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. When severe, pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death are possible.

Novel influenza A (H1N1) is thought to spread in the same way that seasonal influenza virus spread, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus. People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Handling Money

Saint Lucia's Occupational Health and Safety Act require that employers provide employees with the equipment and training needed to execute the job they were hired for. With this in mind the National Influenza Committee is advising persons who handle money on a constant basis (e.g. Bank and Credit Union Tellers, Government and Private Sector Cashiers etc.) to wear gloves.

Gloves do not replace the personal hygiene practices and so money handlers are reminded not to touch their face or other surfaces with the used gloves...as they may spread infection that way....and they should still wash hands often....maybe change gloves often too.

Some businesses have already started the practice and we commend them for being so pro active. The virus can live on a surface for 2 to 8 hours and contaminated money can spread the virus easily as it goes from hand to hand. Vendors, Deliverymen who collect payments and One Person Shops are reminded to wash their hands with soap and water often for 20 seconds and if not available then to use hand sanitizer; advice that remains the same for the general public.

The Government, Red Cross and Civic Society cannot minimise the impact of this virus without the cooperation of the General Public. Each one of us must play our part or we will all remain vulnerable.

REMEMBER -- YOUR BEST DEFENSE IS YOU.

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Further Resources

- Employees [Occupational Health and Safety] Act No. 10 of 1985

Part II Section 3 (d) -- Every employer shall – provide information, training and supervision necessary to ensure the protection of his employees against risk of accident and injury to health arising from their employment.