

Dear Families and Guardians

I am writing to provide you with information in relation to steps being taken by Disability ACT in relation to H1N1 (Human Swine Influenza).

department  
of disability,  
housing &  
community  
services.

Firstly I would like to assure you that Disability ACT recognises the importance of the respite service to families and those who attend and we are working with ACT Health to ensure the least possible disruption to the service. We also have a duty of care to those who attend respite and may, in some circumstances, be required to limit access for some.

The actions below have been developed with ACT Health and relate specifically to our respite service.

Where a person has a confirmed diagnosis of Human Swine Influenza they need to remain quarantined at home and cannot attend Respite until cleared to by their treating medical practitioner.

When a person immediately prior their respite visit demonstrates influenza like symptoms, they will be asked to provide a doctor's certificate confirming they are cleared to attend respite.

When a person demonstrates influenza like symptoms during their stay, they will need to return home until they provide a doctor's certificate confirming they are cleared to attend respite.

Direct contact is considered to be within one metre, for a minimum of 15 minutes, of an individual diagnosed with Human Swine Influenza. In this circumstance it is recommended that you to call *healthdirect* on 1800 022 222 or your usual doctor.

Adults are potentially contagious for about 24 hours before, and up to 7 days after they become unwell. Children may be contagious for up to 10 days.

ACT Health recommends a quarantine period of 3 days for people taking Tamiflu. The quarantine period without Tamiflu is 7 days. There have been no quarantine recommendations for people identified as a *secondary contact*. A *secondary contact* is defined as a person who has been in contact with a person who has been in direct contact with a diagnosed person, who has not yet been diagnosed themselves.

Respite staff have been reminded about their obligation to continue to use standard hygiene practices and to be especially vigilant in monitoring, their own and clients, cold or flu like symptoms.

The basic symptoms for Human Swine Influenza are similar to the normal human seasonal flu and may include:

- \* Fever (greater than 38°C)
- \* Sore throat
- \* Cough
- \* Stuffy nose
- \* Chills
- \* Headache and body aches
- \* Fatigue

To assist ACT Health with contact tracing with this virus, it would be helpful if families using respite advise the team leader if they have travelled to Melbourne, or have been in contact with people who have the virus or who have travelled to Melbourne.

Following ACT Health guidelines, children who have visited Melbourne are not to attend Respite until seven days after their return.

If you are quarantining someone at home, you may wish to access a Fact sheet on the ACT Health website useful -  
<http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=sendfile&ft=p&fid=1243471910&sid=>

In the first instance, people should call the 24 hour health advice line *healthdirect* on 1800 022 222. Callers will be directed to the nearest influenza assessment centre where clinically necessary. Your local doctor will, of course, continue to manage symptomatic people who choose to go to their surgeries. Further information is also available on the ACT Health website: [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) and the Disability ACT website.

If you require specific information in relation to your family member or their attendance at Disability ACT's respite service please contact the service co-ordinator, Ms Jenni Bloomfield directly.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Whale  
A/g Executive Director  
Disability ACT

12 June 2009

cc. ACT Office of the Public Advocate  
ACT Disability Human Rights Commissioner