



If you need to cough or sneeze, use a disposable tissue.



Throw the tissue in a waste bin immediately after use.



Regularly wash your hands with soap and water.



### **Read this brochure carefully.**

*This brochure contains practical information about:*

- ⊗ *New Influenza A (H1N1).*
- ⊗ *What you can do to reduce the likelihood of becoming infected with the new influenza virus.*
- ⊗ *What you should do if you develop flu symptoms.*

### **What is New Influenza A (H1N1)?**

New Influenza A (H1N1) is a virus that causes the flu. The virus is transmitted via airborne droplets of mucus, phlegm and saliva from infected individuals.

These days many people travel, so the new flu virus can spread quickly across the world. Cases of this flu virus have now been identified in many different countries.

In the Netherlands, the official name for this virus is New Influenza A (H1N1) (Nieuwe Influenza A (H1N1)), but the virus is better known as Mexican Flu. Once you are infected with New Influenza A (H1N1), you can transmit the virus to other people. At the moment, the symptoms caused by this virus are considered 'mild', which means that they are similar to the symptoms of ordinary seasonal flu. Most people recover within a week. The difference is that, with New Influenza A (H1N1), there is a risk that many people will become ill at the same time. It is estimated that if the virus continues to spread, 1 in 3 people may become ill. That could affect all kinds of things in our daily lives.

As with ordinary seasonal flu, the new flu will be fatal for some people. Because many more people are expected to become infected and ill with the new flu virus, more fatalities are also predicted.

### **How can I prevent infection?**

Although you cannot completely eliminate the risk of infection, it is possible to reduce it. The flu virus is passed mainly through airborne droplets that are released when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. You can become infected with the virus by inhaling the airborne droplets or by touching a contaminated surface:

#### ⊗ **Regularly wash your hands with soap and water.**

The virus can be transferred to your hands if you touch a contaminated object or shake hands with someone whose hands are contaminated. You should therefore wash your hands regularly and dry them thoroughly afterwards.

#### ⊗ **Touch your eyes, nose and mouth as little as possible.**

The virus can be transferred to your hands if you touch a contaminated object or shake hands with someone whose hands are contaminated. Your hands can then transmit the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

**☞ Clean regularly.**

Clean hard surfaces and objects such as kitchen appliances and door handles regularly with an ordinary cleaning product, especially if infected individuals have used these items.

**☞ Avoid contact with anyone who has the flu.**

If you must come into contact with someone who has the flu, keep the duration of the contact as short as possible and wash your hands afterwards.

**Avoid infecting others!**

**☞ If you need to cough or sneeze, use a disposable tissue.**

When coughing or sneezing, cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue. Throw the tissue in a waste bin immediately after use.

**Follow announcements on the radio, on TV, on the Internet and in newspapers.**

*Use the Internet, radio, TV and newspapers to obtain information about additional measures that you can or must take in order to prevent infection. The latest information and frequently asked questions on New Influenza A (H1N1) can be found at [www.grieppandemie.nl](http://www.grieppandemie.nl)*

**What are the symptoms of the new flu virus?**

The symptoms of New Influenza A (H1N1) are similar to the symptoms of ordinary flu. The most common symptoms are:

- ☞ fever
- ☞ chills
- ☞ headache
- ☞ aches and pains
- ☞ fatigue
- ☞ dry cough

The symptoms normally disappear within 2 to 7 days, except the cough, which can continue for some time. In rare cases, the virus can lead to pneumonia with serious respiratory problems. The virus can be more serious in people with a pre-existing illness or condition.

You are contagious for five or six days, starting from the day when the symptoms begin. Not everyone who becomes infected will become ill. It is possible to be infected with the virus and transmit it to others without ever developing symptoms.

**Is there medicine available?**

Anti-viral drugs called Tamiflu or oseltamivir and Relenza can be used to fight the flu virus. Not everyone who becomes ill will need anti-viral medicine, because most people can easily recover without it. Therefore, these drugs are not recommended for most people. Pregnant women, children aged two and under and people who are summoned every year for a flu shot may need to take anti-virals. Ultimately, your GP will decide whether or not you need to take anti-virals. You can only obtain the drug from the chemist's with a prescription from your GP.

**How do anti-viral drugs work?**

- ☞ *Anti-viral drugs shorten the time that you are ill by 1 or 2 days.*
- ☞ *They make an ill person less contagious.*
- ☞ *Anti-viral drugs do not completely eliminate the risk of infecting other people..*
- ☞ *Because the protection offered by anti-viral drugs wears off over time, they should only be used by people who are actually infected.*

**What should I do if I develop flu symptoms?**

If you have a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher and respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, you may be infected with the new flu virus, in which case you should:

- ☞ rest
- ☞ stay at home

It is not necessary to call your GP (see below for exceptions to this, including pregnant women, very small children and people who are summoned every year for a flu shot).

As with ordinary flu, most people will recover within a week from New Influenza A (H1N1) automatically. However, if your symptoms worsen, you should call your GP.

### **I'm pregnant. What should I do if I develop flu symptoms?**

If you have a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher and respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, **you should call your GP**. Your GP will decide whether you need to be examined. **Do not go to see your GP during surgery hours**, as people in the waiting room could catch the virus from you. If necessary, your GP will prescribe anti-viral drugs for you.

### **I have a child who is two years of age/under two years of age. What should I do if he/she develops flu symptoms?**

If your child has a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher and respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, **you should call your GP**. Your GP will decide whether your child needs to be examined. **Do not take your child to see your GP during surgery hours**, as people in the waiting room could catch the virus. If necessary, your GP will prescribe anti-viral drugs for your child.

### **I am summoned every year for a flu shot. What should I do if I develop flu symptoms?**

You are considered at increased risk of developing complications. If you have a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher and respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, **you should call your GP**. Your GP will decide whether you need to be examined. **Do not go to see your GP during surgery hours**, as people in the waiting room could catch the virus from you. If necessary, your GP will prescribe anti-viral drugs for you.

### **These additional guidelines also apply to anyone with flu symptoms:**

#### **Stay at home and avoid contact with other people.**

The virus is transmitted via airborne droplets that are released when you cough, sneeze and talk. You can avoid infecting someone else by minimising contact with other people.

#### **Follow the tips under 'How can I avoid becoming infected'?**

See page 3.

### **Is there a vaccine available for the new flu virus?**

At this time, there is no vaccine available that protects against the new flu virus. However, scientists are working hard to produce a vaccine.

The government has purchased enough vaccine to vaccinate all residents of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, should this prove necessary. The vaccine is expected to be available this autumn.

### **Who will be vaccinated?**

At the moment, the new flu virus is considered 'mild' and is comparable to ordinary seasonal flu. Therefore, not everyone needs to be vaccinated. It is probably only necessary and worthwhile to vaccinate certain groups of people, although it is still not entirely clear which people should be considered high-risk. Research is currently underway to identify these groups, including monitoring the flu's behaviour in other countries. The government will announce the results of this research.

A separate campaign will be undertaken soon to inform the public about the vaccination.

### **What action is the government taking?**

New Influenza A (H1N1) is a mild flu. However, it is necessary to prepare for a flu pandemic because many people are expected to become ill at the same time.

The Netherlands has purchased enough anti-viral drugs and vaccine to prepare itself for this scenario. The health care sector has also prepared itself for a period in which many people fall ill at the same time.

The government and businesses have drawn up plans to prevent the country from coming to a standstill, even if many people become ill simultaneously. These plans include measures to continue to stock supermarkets and to safeguard the supply of clean drinking water and energy. These facilities are not only essential for our day-to-day life, but also for our safety.

This short brochure is part of an extensive information campaign by the government to inform people about the new flu virus. For more information, go to [www.grieppandemie.nl](http://www.grieppandemie.nl). You can also contact one of the employees at Postbus 51 by calling the freephone number 0800 - 1100 on work days from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.



THESE ARE WAYS TO  
**FIGHT THE FLU**



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