H1N1 Influenza 09: Guidance for Health Care Workers at Increased Risk of Complications

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All health care workers engaged in direct patient care, including those at increased risk of complications from H1N1 Influenza 09, should follow infection control procedures with all patients, regardless of infection status. While infection control procedures will significantly reduce the risk of a health care worker acquiring H1N1 Influenza 09, this may not always offer one hundred per percent protection.

Given that seasonal influenza vaccination is not thought to provide protection against H1NI Influenza 09, health care workers who are at increased risk of complications from H1N1 Influenza 09 and who are likely to be in direct contact with patients whom have influenza like illness which may possibly be H1N1 influenza 09, should be considered for redeployment to lower risk activities.

If redeployment is not possible, health care workers who are at increased risk of complications from H1N1 Influenza 09 should maintain a distance of 1 metre from suspected/confirmed cases and not participate in procedures which may generate small particles or aerosols of respiratory secretions in patients with confirmed or suspected H1N1 Influenza 09. These high risk procedures include: endotracheal intubation, nebulized medication administration, airway suctioning, bronchoscopy, diagnostic sputum induction, positive pressure ventilation via facemask, high frequency oscillatory ventilation.

Health Care Workers at Increased Risk of Complications from H1N1 Influenza 09

Based on the epidemiological profile of cases globally, the following groups are believed to be at increased risk of complications from H1N1 Influenza 09. This may change over time as we learn more about the virus.

a) **Pregnant women**
b) **Individuals with chronic conditions predisposing to severe influenza:**
- Chronic respiratory disease including asthma, COPD;
- Chronic cardiac disease;
- Obesity;
- Renal, hepatic, haematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus); and
- Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV.