

Health Advice for Tour Leaders and Tour Guides Operating Tours outside Hong Kong for Prevention of Human Swine Influenza (Influenza A/H1N1)

The World Health Organization has declared the human swine influenza (swine flu) outbreak a global pandemic. Confirmed cases of swine flu have been reported in many parts of the world, including Hong Kong. The symptoms of swine flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain and headache. Some people infected with swine flu may also have vomiting and diarrhoea.

Human-to-human transmission of swine flu is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu is spread among people, mainly through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching objects soiled with flu viruses and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. Swine flu has not been known to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and cooked pork or pork products.

Tour leaders and tour guides are key persons for members of the tour group when travelling outside Hong Kong. They provide the best of services to make their group members feel at home and take care of their health during the trip. A tour leader or tour guide should therefore cease reception of travellers if he/she experiences the following:

1. Feeling unwell, especially having a fever; or
2. Having been in close contact with suspected or confirmed swine flu patients during the last 7 days. (Close contact means having cared for, having lived with, or having had contact with the respiratory secretions or body fluids of an infected person.)

Before the Trip

- Watch out for the latest developments in the swine flu outbreak when planning travel.
- Check with the Consulate for any health advice or travel advisory imposed at the destination. Maintain regular communication with regard to the outbreak situation in the destination and inform group members about appropriate arrangements in advance if necessary. All group members should be given the most updated health information about swine flu.
- Advise group members to buy medical insurance.
- All group members should be advised to bring their own tissue paper, masks, vomit bags, thermometer and alcohol based hand rub (containing 70-80% alcohol) to ensure a high level of personal hygiene.

- Prepare the following:
 - A list of clinics, doctors and hospitals at the destination, including details such as addresses and telephone numbers.
 - Some useful items such as tissue paper, masks, vomit bags and thermometer for group members' use when necessary.
 - An alcohol-based handrub (containing 70-80% alcohol) for hand hygiene if hands are not visibly soiled. Hand washing is required when hands are visibly soiled.
 - Telephone numbers of family members of the group.
 - Telephone number of the Consulate of relevant countries in the destination.

During the Trip

Restaurants

- Patronise reputable and hygienic restaurants which provide liquid soap and hand washing facilities.
- Request for serving chopsticks and spoons.

The Tour Coach

- Arrange an appropriate coach for the size of group to avoid overcrowding inside the coach.
- The driver should clean the interior of the coach every time before and after carrying tourists.
 - For general purpose, cleanse with a 1 in 99 diluted household bleach solution (mixing 1 part of 5.25% household bleach with 99 parts of water), rinse with water and then wipe/mop dry.
 - If the interior is contaminated with body secretions, e.g. vomitus, use disposable towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and the neighbouring area immediately with appropriate disinfectant, e.g. 1 in 49 diluted household bleach solution (mixing 1 part of 5.25% household bleach with 49 parts of water). Leave for 15-30 minutes. Then rinse with water. Use 70% alcohol for metallic surface.
- Inspect the air conditioning system frequently to ensure good ventilation.
- Make alcohol-based handrub, masks, vomit bags and tissue paper available on the coach for members' use.
- Place a lidded rubbish bin inside the coach to be emptied frequently.

Health Advice for Group Members

- Remind members to avoid travelling if they develop symptoms of influenza.
- Request members to cooperate with port health authorities and comply with all necessary immigration procedures and health checks (locally and abroad) which may include completion of health declaration forms and compliance with temperature checking.
- Remind members to observe good personal and environmental hygiene:
 - Put rubbish in a rubbish bin. Use a tissue paper to hold their spit and discard it into a bin with a lid.
 - Keep hands clean at all times. Wash hands with liquid soap after going to the toilet, before meals or handling food, and after touching public installations or equipment.
 - Avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes. If unavoidable, wash hands before touching them. If hand washing facilities are not available, clean hands with an alcohol-based handrub.
 - Have tissue paper handy and cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.
 - Have masks handy and put one on when visiting crowded places of an affected area, or when the members themselves or any member of the tour group develops flu-like symptoms.
 - To prevent spread of infection, do not share towels or personal items.
 - Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.
 - Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip. Do not smoke.
- Remind members to inform the tour leader and tour guide immediately if they develop fever or any symptoms during the trip.
- Provide the following information to members for use in case of any discomfort or emergency:
 - The name, room number and telephone number of the tour leader/tour guide.
 - Telephone number of the hotel's reception desk.
- Regularly look out for the latest swine flu situation and act in the best interest of the group members.

If a Group Member Feels Unwell

- The sick group member and his/her carers should put on a mask immediately.

- The tour leader/tour guide should also wear a mask and help arrange for medical treatment of the sick member immediately.
- Seek medical advice on whether the sick member could continue travelling with other members of the group. If required, the tour members should follow the instructions given by the local health authorities.
- If the sick member is suspected to have swine flu and is required to be hospitalised for investigation, the tour leader/tour guide should immediately call the Department of Health's hotline at (852) 2125 1111.
- The tour leader/tour guide should cooperate with the local health authority in the subsequent tracing of travel collaterals.

After the Trip

- Advise members to avoid going to crowded places and pay close attention to their health.
- If they develop fever or flu-like symptoms, they should seek medical consultation from public clinics or hospitals right away.
- Keep personal information and telephone numbers of the group members for at least 2 weeks to facilitate investigation if required.

Support Services

- For Hong Kong residents who encounter entry or exit difficulties on quarantine grounds while abroad, they can call Immigration Department's hotline at (852)1868.

Health Information for Travellers

- For health information for travellers, please call the Department of Health's Travel Health Centre at 2961 8840 or 2150 7235, or visit the Department of Health's Traveller's Health Service website at <http://www.travelhealth.gov.hk>.
- For information on swine flu, please call the Department of Health's hotline at 2125 1111 or visit the Centre for Health Protection's website at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Department of Health

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