



Dear Associations,

Due to the recent rise of Swine Flu cases in Victoria we would like to give you as much information as we possibly can on the virus and what you should do in the event of a person being diagnosed.

Below is information on the virus and this link to the Victorian Government Website will also provide you with further information <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/diseases/swine-influenza>.

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Outbreaks of swine flu happen regularly in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of swine flu happen in people who are around pigs but it also spreads from person to person.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhoea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have occurred with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. At the present time, the strain in Australia has proved not generally severe but deaths have occurred overseas.

How do you catch swine flu?

Spread of swine flu can occur in two ways:

1. Through contact with infected pigs or environments contaminated with swine flu viruses.
2. Through contact with a person with swine flu. Human-to-human spread of swine flu appears to occur in the same way as seasonal flu. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

1. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
3. Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you are exhibiting symptoms the Australian health authorities recommend you see your GP as soon as possible. You should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others. If your GP believes you may have swine flu you will be tested as soon as possible.

At this stage, health authorities in Victoria have decided only to close some schools where the virus has been known to spread and have not closed down work places or sporting events. This has been considered to be unnecessary at this time. Basketball Victoria does not have the expertise to make such decisions and can only rely on Government health authorities' advice. Basketball Victoria will continue to monitor the situation and of course, will comply with any Government directions or advice.

In the event that a person within your association is diagnosed with swine flu, please follow the simple steps outlined below to alleviate further cases:

1. Notify their Club or Association
2. Association/Club should then advise their teams and withdraw the affected team for at least 5 days until it appears that no other person on the team is infected
3. Notify all other team members and advise them to seek medical advice
4. Notify any opposition team they had played against in the previous 24/48 hours and suggest they seek medical advice.

For the most up-to-date information visit www.health.vic.gov.au or call the Influenza Hotline 180 2007 or call Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 - for expert health information and advice (freecall 24 hours, 7 days).

You should also monitor media stories on the flu.

Regards,

Wayne Bird
Chief Executive Officer