



National Institutes of Health - Pakistan

(Centers for Disease Control-(CDC-NIH)

Phone: (92-051) 9255237 Fax: (92-051)9255099

National Focal Point for IHR



No: F.1-22/Advisory/CDC/2024

Islamabad, 5th January 2024

Travel Advisory for the Prevention of Influenza and other respiratory infections

Purpose:

Influenza like illness (ILI) is caused by Influenza, Respiratory Syncytial virus and other flu viruses. Flu viruses are continuously changing with a likelihood of emergence of new flu viruses every year. This makes Influenza an unpredictable disease with varying extent of spread, timing, severity, and length of the season. However, an upsurge of cases in Pakistan is usually been observed in winter season. The flu cases increase as temperature falls during December and February. The number of influenza cases are observed to be higher in Islamabad specifically due to various reasons ranging from weather instability (dry cold) which causes low precipitation.

The objective of this advisory is to alert and sensitize all the incoming travelers regarding the ILI situation in country specially Islamabad.

The information about the illness is summarized below:

Clinical Picture:

Seasonal influenza viruses can cause mild to severe illness, particularly in the high-risk individuals. Viruses spread from person to person through sneezing, coughing or touching contaminated surfaces. The symptoms start to develop within 48 hours to 10 days of possible exposure and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, and fatigue. The illness may deteriorate among high risk groups including pregnant women, children under 5 years of age, older people, individuals with chronic medical conditions (such as chronic cardiac, pulmonary, renal, metabolic, neurodevelopmental, liver or hematologic diseases) and individuals with immunosuppressive conditions/treatments (such as HIV, receiving chemotherapy or steroids, or malignancy).

Prevention & Treatment:

Flu infections are mostly self-limiting and will recover from on their own or may requiring supportive treatment only. Hospitalization is only required when the disease complicates especially in high risk groups. Therefore, People with severe symptoms or other medical conditions should seek medical care.

Prevention Measures for incoming Travelers:

Travelers are encouraged to report, if they have signs/ symptoms of ILI. In this situation traveler should:

- Inform the Airport health staff immediately
- Seek medical care immediately from designated hospitals and inform about complete travel history and signs/ symptoms.
- Avoid close unprotected contact with others.
- Cover mouth and nose with face mask.
- Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue or the inner crook of your elbow in order to avoidcontamination of your hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap

andwater are not available.

Vaccination: It is the most effective way to prevent infection and severe outcomes caused by influenza viruses particularly in high risk groups. The WHO therefore, recommends seasonal influenza vaccination for pregnant women (highest priority), children aged 6-59 months, elderly people, individuals with chronic medical conditions and health-care workers.

For 2022-2023, the WHO recommends quadrivalent vaccines for use in the northern hemisphere influenza season contain the following:

- *an A/Wisconsin/588/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus*
- *an A/Darwin/6/2021 (H3N2)-like virus and*
- *a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus*
- *an A/Sydney/5/2021 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus*

For any further assistance in this context, the center for Disease control (CDC), NIH (051 – 9255237 and Fax No. 051-9255575) may be contacted.

This advisory may please be widely distributed among all concerned

(Dr. Muhammad Salman)
Chief Executive Officer
NIH, Islamabad

Distribution overleaf