

## How to Handle the New Strain of Influenza Q&A

Is the new strain of Influenza dangerous?

It has been said that the virulence of the new strain of influenza is no different from that of the regular seasonal influenza. However, it is a virus which has newly emerged and is characterized by a high rate of infection. It is a contagious infection which is spread through infected droplets (spray) issued by coughing or sneezing etc. Please take the same measures that you would use to avoid regular influenza. And if you become infected, please react calmly, seek treatment and rest.

It has been reported on T.V. that people have died?

Please get accurate information from inquiring at the “Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Information Concerning Influenza A (H1N1) Web Site,” (English is also available) or from the Health Department of your local City or Town. The mass media has often issued information about deaths but at this point in time, the ratio of deaths has not been reported to be any higher than that of the seasonal flu. Early treatment is very effective.

Although it seems that many people are only affected by a mild case of the new flu, it has become known that the new strain of influenza can occasionally cause viral pneumonia. If this is the case, because it can likely become a serious life-threatening condition, immediate hospitalization is necessary.

What symptoms appear ?

Sore throat, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, headache, chills and fever appear. Muscle pain, abdominal pain etc. can also appear. When chest pains, difficulty breathing and other symptoms appear, there is a possibility of viral pneumonia.

If I thought I was infected ?

If symptoms such as a fever of 38 degrees or more, headache, muscle pain etc. begin then you should immediately inquire by phone at the Health Department of your Prefecture, City or Town (or at the High Fever Consultation Center) and after confirming at what hospital you could best receive treatment, please go to the hospital. Medicines such as Tamiflu etc. are effective. Please follow the instructions of the doctor and take the medicine that he proscribes for you during the entire time that he instructs you to do so. During this time, please do not go to Mass or to work and

take plenty of time to rest.

When coughing or sneezing, we should all use a tissue or a mask. After using the tissue or mask we should discarded them in a trash bin that has a lid.

What about prevention ?

Use the same methods as the regular flu.

Eat a well-balanced diet to strengthen your body and your resistance to the flu.

Gargle and wash your hands

Wear a mask etc.

Avoid crowded areas etc.

What about trips abroad or travel?

When you travel overseas or domestically, please be careful because of the high possibility of infection on plane flights etc. Please be sensitive to your physical condition for one week after travel. During that time, please avoid Mass or gatherings of people. If all is well, then return to your normal activities.

For the immediate week after foreign travel, Pastoral Ministers and other Ministers, should whenever possible, avoid immediate contact with people. I recommend that the Sunday Masses etc. conducted immediately after returning to Japan from a foreign trip be done as a Communion Service by the laity. I ask for the understanding and the cooperation of the laity in this matter.

What about receiving Communion ?

When there are signs of the new strain flu outbreak in a parish, please stop receiving communion by mouth and only receive it by hand. Also, please stop receiving the Precious Blood during that time. The responsible priest can almost make a determination of whether Ministers distributing communion should wear masks as a preventative measure.

What about hospital visits?

Please be careful when visiting the hospital not to infect a sick person and not to let the visiting Minister be infected either. In the case where a Pastoral Minister or another Minister is infected, proper care should be taken so that they immediately change their schedule and let another Minister take their place.

While being careful for each others health, please conduct normal church activities.

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Bishop Tani Daiji

