



Opening hours: 09.00h-12.00h

To all Citizens of Switzerland and
Liechtenstein

Your reference:
Your message of:
Our reference: 435.4/110.50 - FFR
Jakarta, 14.05.2009

Influenza A(H1N1) (swine flu) - personal pandemic preparedness

Dear Fellow Citizens,

On 29 April 2009, the World Health Organisation (WHO) responded to the flu epidemic in Mexico caused by a new virus and to cases of infection in several countries by raising the pandemic alarm level to 5. Since then the situation has eased. There have been almost no deaths outside Mexico, and even in Mexico the number of confirmed fatalities is smaller than originally feared.

However, the WHO expects that the epidemic will continue to spread. It is quite possible that the virus will mutate and become more dangerous. The bird flu virus is also still present and could, if it mutates, trigger a pandemic.

The case of influenza A(H1N1) has again graphically shown that once an epidemic breaks out it is often too late for preparations. Preventive private purchase of Tamiflu® and of protective masks was no longer possible in Mexico and other countries once the danger of an acute pandemic became known.

The pandemic alarm was also a warning for the community of states. Many countries which have so far tended to neglect pandemic planning are now making more rigorous preparations. However, not all countries are in a position to do this, and even in countries where there is sufficient provision for a pandemic, individual responsibility is essential.

We would therefore urge you to note the recommendations for personal pandemic preparedness (see attachment) that the FDFA and the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) have issued for Swiss citizens abroad. Reference has already been made to this in previous issues of the Swiss Review. On the website www.pandemia.ch you will

also find a wealth of information about the present pandemic situation and recommended hygiene measures. Under the heading "Prevention and Treatment" you will find a page on "ill Swiss citizens abroad" which always contains updated information from the FDFA and the FOPH for Swiss citizens abroad.

Please note that counterfeit Tamiflu® is being sold, especially via the Internet (distinguishing features of Original Tamiflu® cf. [German: http://www.roche.com/de/med_mbtamiflu05d.pdf; English: http://www.roche.com/tamiflu_factsheet.pdf]). Tamiflu® may be taken only under medical supervision (danger of side effects and development of resistance!).

The FDFA has established a small reserve of Tamiflu® for Swiss citizens. This emergency reserve, stored at the Embassy of Switzerland in Jakarta and at the Honorary Consulate in Bali, will be released only in an emergency and then only to ill individuals who did not have any possibility of obtaining Tamiflu® privately in time. Showing of a physician prescription is compelling.

The Embassy is at your disposal for any questions. However, if you have medical questions, we will have to refer you to your doctor, to the local health authorities or to the telephone hotline of the Federal Office of Health (+41 31 322 21 00, during Swiss office hours).

Yours Sincerely,

THE AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND

Bernardino Regazzoni

Attachment Mentioned