



Protect yourself from influenza (flu) – advice for travellers

Influenza is an airborne virus spreading easily through the air when people already infected cough and sneeze. It is also transmitted through hands and touch, which can carry the infection.

Simple steps for reducing the risk of infection:

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a disposable tissue. Throw used tissues in the bin soon after.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use alcohol-based hand cleansers. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Before and during travel

If you are about to travel, find out whether there are any confirmed cases of the new strain of H1N1 influenza (swine flu) among humans in your destination country. The situation is evolving rapidly. The best place to get up-to-date information is the internet. See below for a list of useful links.

- While travelling, follow local news and the guidelines of local health officials.
- Wash your hands regularly. This will protect you also from other possible infections.
- Avoid close contact with people who appear to be ill. If you yourself feel ill with flu-like symptoms, avoid close contact with others.
- If you fall ill while travelling and need medical attention, contact local authorities or the Finnish embassy or consulate. They can help you find the appropriate medical care.

After travel

- After returning from an infected area, observe your health closely for the next seven days.
- The symptoms of the H1N1 influenza are similar to the symptoms of regular flu. The most common symptoms include fever (38 °C or more), cough, a runny nose or a sore throat. Other influenza symptoms include body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. In some cases, the symptoms may also include diarrhoea or vomiting.
- If you feel ill with flu-like symptoms, contact your local health centre by telephone. Talk to your physician over the phone rather than visiting the health centre. This will help protect others from being infected. If necessary, you will be referred for further examination and treatment.
- Tell your doctor about your symptoms and your recent travel and about whether you think you have been in contact with people infected with influenza.
- Stay home. Do not go to work or school or run errands. This helps prevent the spread of the virus.

More information on influenza and possible travel restrictions

- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, <http://formin.finland> > Countries and regions
- European Centre of Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), <http://ecdc.europa.eu>
- World Health Organisation (WHO), <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>