

GENERAL INFORMATION ON PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS CLINICS

1. What are PPCs and how are they selected?

PPCs or Pandemic Preparedness Clinics are primary healthcare clinics that form a vital part of the Health Ministry's Flu Pandemic Response Framework. PPCs are supported with Personal Protection Equipment and Tamiflu from the national stockpile to help manage the flu outbreak in the community. All polyclinics are also part of the PPC framework. Being located islandwide, PPCs will help ensure easy access to medical assessment and prompt treatment for people with flu-like illnesses. PPCs have undergone the necessary training to enable them to manage safely both flu cases and patients with other non infectious health conditions without cross infecting patients. Pandemic Preparedness Clinics (PPCs) can be recognised by the "H1N1 ready" symbol.

(for picture of decal – pls obtain from MOH website).

2. Where can I get a listing of PPC?

The PPC listing will be update regularly and it can be obtained from our MOH and HPB websites

You can also sms CLINIC to 70550 (Toll-free for M1 and StarHub only).

3. What are the operational hours of PPC?

PPC will open as per their usual consultation hours. You may wish to call the clinic to check on their operating hours before making the visit. Patients who require urgent medical attention should go to the nearest hospital's Emergency Department (ED) as per usual practice.

4. Will any testing (lab or rapid diagnosis) of H1N1-2009 be done at PPC?

Laboratory testing to confirm H1N1 is not available in PPCs and polyclinics. There is no need either for GPs to send all suspected cases to hospital for testing. Laboratory testing for Influenza A (H1N1-2009) is not necessary before commencement of treatment. Doctors would exercise clinical judgment in prescribing anti-virals on a case by case basis taking into account patient's medical condition, risk of developing influenza related complications, prevalence of Influenza A (H1N1-2009) in the community and after weighing the risks and benefits of treatment.

5. What should I do if I am having flu-like symptoms (fever, runny nose, sore throat or cough)?

Members of the public who develop influenza-like illness (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose) can visit the nearest PPC or polyclinic for initial

assessment and treatment. Please put on a surgical mask on your way to the clinic and avoid taking public transport if possible. Depending on the severity of their illness and other risk factors, they may be referred to the hospital for further management.

However, if your condition deteriorates and/or you develop symptoms such as having difficulty in breathing, chest pain, severe vomiting, please call 995 to bring you to the nearest hospital for immediate medical attention.

6. If I have flu like symptoms (fever, runny nose, sore throat or cough), can I go to a GP clinic that is not under PPC for consultation?

Yes, but you may wish to call the clinic to check on their preparations to manage flu cases during this pandemic and their operating hours.

7. Would PPC or polyclinic prescribe Tamiflu to all flu cases?

No, in fact most cases with mild disease may not require Tamiflu. The doctor who sees you will decide whether you need Tamiflu, on a case by case basis, based on his/her clinical assessment. Indiscriminate prescription of Tamiflu may also lead to drug resistance and render it ineffective for necessary future treatment.

8. Do I have to pay for Tamiflu prescribed by PPC?

Yes. The usual consultation fee and cost of medicine will apply.

9. Will I be given medical leave for flu and what other advices would the PPC doctor give me?

As a general recommendation, MOH has advised doctors to give Medical Certificate to patients presenting with influenza-like illness for up to 7 days (for adults) and up to 10 days (for children below 13 years old) from onset of symptoms.

Please do not go out when you are on medical leave, and minimize contact with other household members especially those who are at high risk for complications. You are also advised to return to see the doctor if your condition does not improve, or call 995 if your condition worsens (e.g. becomes breathless) and you require urgent medical attention.

10. Should I take Tamiflu as prophylaxis or prevention?

In general, anti-virals need not be given for pre-exposure prophylaxis (i.e. before your contact with a confirmed case). Post exposure prophylaxis could, however, be considered for contacts of confirmed cases who are at higher risk

for influenza-related complications or other circumstances where the doctor feels is clinically appropriate.

Please note that as with any medication, Tamiflu has its own side effects and should be taken only if directed by the doctor.

Special medical risk group:

11. Who are the people who are at higher risk of developing complications of flu?

- a. Children < 5 years
- b. Pregnant women
- c. Adults and children who have chronic lung (such as asthma) or heart disease
- d. Adults and children who have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalisation during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, haemoglobinopathies or immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications for cancer or by the HIV)
- e. Children and teenagers aged 6 months to 18 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and therefore might be at risk for developing Reye syndrome after influenza infection
- f. Persons aged 65 years and older

Pregnant women, patients on cancer treatment and patients on dialysis

If you have flu-like symptoms, please consult the specialist who has been taking care of you. If you do not have a regular specialist, you could go to the nearest PPC where the doctor will do an initial assessment and advise on further management.

However, if your condition deteriorates and/or you develop symptoms such as having difficulty in breathing, chest pain, severe vomiting, please call 995 to bring you to the nearest hospital for immediate medical attention.

Children:

12. My young child is unwell with flu-like symptoms. Do I bring him to my GP?

You may bring your child to your nearest PPC or if the condition is severe, to KKH Emergency Department (ED) or National University Hospital (NUH) Emergency Department (ED). You can also bring your child to the

pediatrician who has been taking care of your child's medical conditions. Some paediatricians are also part of the PPC framework.

If medically indicated, the doctors at the PPCs, polyclinics or pediatrician may prescribe syrup Tamiflu for your child. However, national stockpile of syrup medication can only be collected at the polyclinic pharmacies, KKH ED Pharmacy, or NUH ED Pharmacy. This is due to the special transport and storage needs of these medications. Parents and caregivers may wish to collect these syrup medications on behalf of their child with the prescription collected at PPC. There is no need for you to seek another round of consultation with the doctor at the hospital or polyclinics in order to obtain the medication.

MOH has advised that GPs should not prescribe Tamiflu for **children < 1 year of age but** should refer the child to KKH/NUH or private sector paediatricians if the GP feels that the child may require Tamiflu. .

In severe cases where your child's condition deteriorates and/or your child develops symptoms such as having difficulty in breathing, severe vomiting, poor feeding, drowsiness, etc), please call 995 to bring your child to the nearest hospital for immediate medical attention.

13. May I know the closing time of these pharmacies if I am prescribed the syrup medication?

The polyclinics (NHGP and SHP) pharmacies are opened during their normal operating hours but 6 selected polyclinics will have extended pharmacy opening hours (Monday to Friday: 8.00AM to 8.00PM; Saturday: 8.00AM to 2.00PM). A list of these polyclinics is available on the PPC Tamiflu syrup prescription form. KKH ED Pharmacy and NUH ED Pharmacy are opened 24 hours everyday.