



# **Glen Abbot Ltd.**

## **Swine Flu Briefing 34 – 20/09/2009**

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### **Current Situation:**

Well we could be seeing the start of in the increase we all have been predicting. The following was part of the statement this week by Sir Liam Donaldson England's Chief Medical Officer:

*"We might be seeing the start of an upturn. There are straws in the wind, from the increase in consultations with GPs and a small increase in hospitalisations. It suggests swine flu is coming back."*

The majority of new cases are in school age children.

In Scotland, the estimated number of cases nearly doubled last week to over 6,000.

The Government are well aware of the affect that wholesale school closures would have and are very keen to avoid them. See this quote from Justin McCracken, Chief Executive of the Health Protection Agency. "We would not expect schools to close as long as it is still possible to operate them. Now the virus is out there in the community, we do not think [closures] would mean any significant delay in the spread of the virus."

### **Surfaces...the story changes!**

The most recent advice was that the virus could exist for 2 hours on hard surfaces and 20 minutes on soft. The NHS in the UK has now amended that to:

*The flu virus can live on a hard surface for up to 24 hours, and a soft surface for around 20 minutes*

### **I could have been in contact...**

Probably one of the questions I get asked most is what should someone who doesn't have flu symptoms but has been in contact with a sick person do. This is critical for businesses as it will strongly affect the level of absence.



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Again I will quote the NHS:

*If you are feeling well, you should continue your normal activities, including going to school or work.*

*It can take up to seven days (normally two to five days) after infection for swine flu symptoms to develop.*

And if you have it, when do you go back?

*You can go back to school or work when you are feeling well and are no longer infectious. Adults are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms and remain infectious while their symptoms continue, which is usually for up to five days.*

*They can normally return to work within seven days. In children, symptoms continue for up to seven days and they can normally return to school within 10 days.*

## **Tamiflu vs Relenza**

Relenza reduces the duration of flu symptoms by one-and-a-half days on average, Tamiflu for up to two days.

## **How long are you infectious?**

I am always careful in this briefing to try to avoid scare stories or at least those which cannot be verified, but sometimes I feel it is important that you are aware of speculation I hear of. This comes from Fox News, so you have been warned!

*When the coughing stops is probably a better sign of when a swine flu patient is no longer contagious, experts said after seeing new research that suggests the virus can still spread many days after a fever goes away.*

*The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been telling people to stay home from work and school and avoid contact with others until a day after their fever breaks. The new research suggests they may need to be careful for longer — especially at home where the risk of spreading the germ is highest.*

*Swine flu also appears to be contagious longer than ordinary seasonal flu, several experts said.*

*"This study shows you're not contagious for a day or two. You're probably contagious for about a week," said Gaston De Serres, a scientist at the Institute of Public Health in Quebec.*

By way of balance, here is the view of the NHS:

*People are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms. They can continue to shed (spread) the virus (for example, in coughs and sneezes) for up to five days (seven days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside, and once their symptoms are gone they are no longer considered infectious to others.*

### **Past Briefings**

All previous briefings are available at our website:

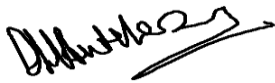
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### **Training and Consultancy**

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop ([goward@continuityshop.com](mailto:goward@continuityshop.com)).

We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on [Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk). Our office number is 01738 580580.

Yours sincerely



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