



World Health Organization Raises H1N1 Flu Outbreak Status to Phase 6

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According to Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization the ongoing outbreak of H1N1 flu continues to expand across the globe. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated the status of the H1N1 flu outbreak from that of a Phase 5 to a Phase 6, meaning that H1N1 is now officially a pandemic. This upgrade should not be taken to mean that the H1N1 is more virulent; rather, it refers to its geographic spread.

According to WHO, "Phase 5 is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region." WHO goes on to describe the current Phase 6, the pandemic phase, as being "characterized by community level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different WHO region, in addition to the criteria defined in Phase 5" meaning that the virus has now appeared in two WHO world regions. WHO's global regions are: Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, the Americas, South-East Asia and the Western Pacific.

WHO goes on to explain that "a pandemic carries no connotation of severity. It means a global epidemic (i.e., an unusual upsurge in cases) of a disease." A pandemic can be severe or mild. It can start mild and become severe, or start severe and become mild. It can also start mild and stay mild, or start severe and stay severe."

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is not recommending that people avoid travel. However, if you are planning travel to affected areas, Travelers can protect themselves and others by continuing to follow simple prevention practices that apply while travelling and in daily life. Regular hand-washing, normal cough etiquette, avoiding contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections, these are a few of the steps travelers can take.

The CDC's Travel Health Warning recommending against non-essential travel to Mexico, in effect since April 27, 2009, has now been downgraded to a Travel Health Precaution for Mexico.

The following are resources you can use when counseling travelers:

SOS.travel

[World Health Organization - H1N1 Flu Centers for Disease Control - H1N1 Flu](#)

[Dehoney Travel](#) is a member of ASTA (American Society of Travel Agents) the world's largest association of travel professionals and also a part of the [Tourism Emergency Response Network \(TERN\)](#), the worldwide travel community that is working closely with the World Health Organization and sharing views on a regular basis. This ensures that the special situation of travelers is taken fully into account by WHO and that the industry is able to provide the best and most accurate advice to travelers. Member alerts will be provided as the situation evolves.

We at [Dehoney Travel](#) are committed to your travel safety and to providing you with the most up to date travel conditions. Please contact us for further details or information.



**3008 Charlestown Crossing
New Albany, IN 47150**
Phone: 800-325-6708 or 812-206-1080
Fax: 812-206-1085
E-mail: info@dehoneytravel.com
Website: www.dehoneytravel.com