



Ministry of Health & Human Services

P.O. Box 6027 Koror, Republic of Palau 96940

Phone: (680) 488-2552/3 Fax: (680) 488-1211

E-mail: administration@palahealth.org Website: www.palahealth.org

BELAU NATIONAL HOSPITAL REPORTS INCREASE IN FLU-LIKE ILLNESS

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The Ministry of Health and Human Services would like to inform the public once again that there has been an increase in flu-like illness seen at the Belau National Hospital. Cases at the Hospital ER and OPD have nearly doubled in the last two weeks. Tests indicate these illnesses are caused by parainfluenza virus 3, human rhinovirus/enterovirus, parainfluenza 4, and adenovirus – viruses that cause a range of illnesses from the common cold to bronchitis and pneumonia.

HOW INFECTIONS ARE SPREAD: Infections spread through the air by coughing and sneezing, close personal contact such as shaking hands, and touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

SYMPTOMS: Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, croup, bronchitis, bronchiolitis, pneumonia, sore throat, sneezing, ear pain, irritability and decreased appetite. They usually develop within 2 to 7 days from exposure and most will recover within 7-10 days.

TREATMENT: There is no specific treatment for parainfluenza virus infection. People who are sick should drink plenty of liquids and stay home and rest. You should see a doctor if your symptoms are severe or do not improve.

PREVENTION: Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene to prevent and protect against the spread of infection.

- **Wash hands frequently** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing** and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.
- **Avoid contact** with sick people; touching eyes, nose and mouth. Stay home if you are sick.
- **Keep things clean**, especially frequently used surfaces and objects (e.g. doorknobs and children's toys) with a virus-killing disinfectant. Do not share cups and eating utensils if you are ill.
- **Avoid crowds and gatherings** if you get sick easily (young, elderly, weak immune system).
- **Build up your immune system** by maintaining a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting adequate rest, not smoking and avoiding stress.

If you or your child is experiencing any of the symptoms above, please contact your doctor or the Belau National Hospital OPD (488-2555) or the ER (488-2558) for instructions. For emergencies, call 911.