Dealing with Swine Flu

Why in news?

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The Health Department has issued an alert on H1N1, which has been showing a slight increase in the State since the beginning of the year.

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What is H1N1?

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- H1N1 flu is also known as swine flu. It's called **swine flu** because in the past, the people who caught it had direct contact with pigs.
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- In 2009, H1N1 was spreading fast around the world, so the World Health Organization called it a **pandemic.**
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- When people who have it cough or sneeze, they spray tiny drops of the virus into the air.
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- If you come in contact with these drops, touch a surface (like a doorknob or sink) where the drops landed, or touch something an infected person has recently touched, you can catch H1N1 swine flu.
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- Its symptoms are pretty much the same as seasonal flu. They can include – Cough, Fever, Sore throat, Stuffy or runny nose, Body aches, Headache, Chills and Fatigue.
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What is its geographical spread?

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- The statistics of the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Project** of the Health Department shows that there have been 233 confirmed cases of

H1N1 this year till date, including 16 deaths.
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- H1N1 has been on the rise in **all south Indian States** this year and doctors should necessarily follow the ABC guidelines and standard treatment protocols for H1N1 when treating patients with cold and fever.
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What are ABC guidelines?

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- The Centre has come up with exhaustive guidelines for the States to follow for combating the H1N1 outbreak.
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- In **Category A** will be those who do not require testing for H1N1. Patients with mild fever, cough and sore throat, body ache, headache, nausea and diarrhoea will be put in Category A and can be monitored for 24-48 hours.
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- These patients will be advised to stay at home and not mingle with the others. They will not need testing for H1N1 and no treatment with **Oseltamivir.**
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- In **Category B** will be those who have all the symptoms mentioned in Category A, but have high-grade fever and are in the high-risk category; they will need treatment with Oseltamivir and will have to be confined at home.
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- High-risk category includes children with mild illness, pregnant women, persons over 65, patients with lung, liver, heart, kidney, blood or neurological diseases or have been on long-term cortisone therapy.
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- In **Category C** will be those who have all the signs and symptoms of Category A and B and depending on their health condition will have to be hospitalised.
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What is the way ahead?

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- The public should take care to seek professional care if mild influenza, cough, cold with fever or respiratory distress do not subside in a reasonable

time.
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- Pregnant women, children, elderly, and those with respiratory issues; co-morbidities such as diabetes, renal diseases, hypertension and cardiac issues; and immune-compromised conditions such as cancer or HIV should take special care as H1N1 has been known to cause high mortality among these groups.
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- People with flu should stay home away from crowded public places.
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Source: The Hindu

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