

# Yorkshire and Humber Critical Care Networks

## Guidance on Stepping Down Isolation of Level 3 Patients With Suspected or Confirmed H1N1 infection J Groves

To my knowledge there is no research based evidence on this topic. The following is a summary of opinion sought from national medical leads for ITU, local adult and paediatric intensivists and the HPA.

To step down isolation in a straight forward case:

- The patient must have completed a 5 day course of Tamiflu and be free of flu symptoms. This means in practice:
  - They are extubated or heading towards extubation
  - They are free of persistent fever

Ventilated patients with signs of pneumonitis should remain isolated beyond 5 days.

- They may shed virus for prolonged periods (weeks if symptomatic) and should have at least a 10 day course of Tamiflu.

Ventilated patients who have had, and are recovering from severe pneumonitis may be considered for step down provided:

- They have completed a course of Tamiflu as above
- They are clearly improving. In practice this means they are:
  - Extubated or heading towards extubation
  - Are free of fever

It should be noted that:

- Patients with normal immunity should not be infective after 7 to 10 days.
- The necessary duration of treatment with Tamiflu is unclear.
- A positive PCR test (swab) does not indicate whether they are infectious.
- A negative PCR test (swab) does not indicate the patient is not infectious.

The implication of the above is that patients who have severe pneumonitis may need to be isolated (or kept in a cohort area) for several weeks.

*In all cases staff are reminded to take advice from their Infection Prevention team*