

Vic man with swine flu dies in hospital

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A 35-year-old Victorian man who had been diagnosed with swine flu has died in hospital.

Victorian health authorities are refusing to confirm whether a Colac man diagnosed with swine flu died as a direct result of the H1N1 virus.

The 35-year-old man from western Victorian presented to the Colac Hospital with flu-like symptoms on Friday and was transferred to the Maroondah Hospital in Melbourne's outer east where he died on Saturday.



Test results released to the Victorian health department on Tuesday showed the man tested positive for swine flu after swabs were taken following his death.

Acting chief health officer Dr Rosemary Lester said the man received treatment consistent with the symptoms of his severe illness.

"He wouldn't have been treated any differently if we'd known that he had swine flu from the outset," Dr Lester told reporters.

"He arrived with an influenza-like illness and then I believe he rapidly deteriorated.

"His respiratory function deteriorated and he went into shock quite quickly."

Dr Lester said the man had a "range of underlying medical conditions".

She would not confirm whether the man's death was a direct result of swine flu or one of the other medical conditions.

"I'm obviously not the clinician - that's for the clinicians to decide what he's died from," she said.

"My information that it is respiratory failure, but other than that I can't make any comment."

There are five Victorians receiving treatment in intensive care with swine flu out of 18 in hospital.

"We know that around about four per cent of the ones we are testing are currently swine flu positive," Dr Lester said.

"We do however expect that proportion to rise as more testing's undertaken".

Dr Lester said more deaths from swine flu were expected.

"Unfortunately, I think it is quite possible that more people will die from swine flu.

"We know that in a usual influenza season across Australia about 2,500 to 3,000 people will die from influenza, and we don't expect swine flu to be any different."

All Australian state and territories including Victoria are now operating in the "protect" phase, which focuses on the protection of people in high-risk groups.

A West Australian man was the first Australian with swine flu to die last Friday.

The 26-year-old died in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on Friday afternoon after being diagnosed with the virus on Thursday, but he had also been suffering from a number of other serious health conditions.

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon said the latest death was a reminder swine flu could present severe consequences for some people, including those who have respiratory diseases, pregnant women and the morbidly obese.

"I would also like to take the opportunity to remind people that for the vast majority this infection remains mild and most people will make a rapid and full recovery with no medical intervention," she told parliament.

"Unfortunately, as this disease continues to spread through the community, it is inevitable that we will experience more cases with severe outcomes, potentially also resulting in death."