



Please wash hands first! Because of H1N1 virus people dealing with preterm babies need to comply scrupulously with hygiene requirements. (Picture: EFCNI)

## Press release

### **H1N1 virus: preterm babies at special risk**

EFCNI advises strict hygiene to curb swine flu

**Munich, 31 August 2009 (ps) – “Public concern about contracting the H1N1 virus – also known as swine flu – is set to increase in the fall and winter months. It’s a concern shared most particularly by the parents of newborns,” says Prof. Ortwin Adams, Department of Virology, Düsseldorf University. Preterm babies whose lungs and other body systems have not fully developed are believed to be at increased risk. The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) outlines what families and doctors can do about it.**

#### **Avoid crowded waiting rooms**

Parents, visitors of premature infants in hospital or at home, nurses and doctors need to comply scrupulously with hygiene requirements to protect the children from infection. “Systematic hand disinfection is easy – you only have to rub your hands with disinfectant for 30 seconds before each contact with the patient,” advises Prof. Christian Poets of Tübingen University Hospital, who is an EFCNI Political Advisory Board member. “And parents of preterm infants should avoid crowded waiting rooms. Many pediatricians have special regulations for infection prevention which should be applied in the case of children born with a very low birth weight,” the neonatologist goes on to say.

Würmanger 5  
85757 Karlsfeld  
Tel: 08131/908559  
Fax: 08131/614311  
info@efcni.com  
www.efcni.com

Pediatricians should inform parents about the need for pharmacological prophylaxis and ensure in particular that preterm infants do not spend time in communal waiting rooms but are brought straight to treatment rooms, the EFCNI – a charitable organization - advises.

### **Risk too early to predict**

The medical expert Prof. Ortwin Adams, Department of Virology, Düsseldorf University, has this to say: "It's too early yet to predict the risk involved for newborns that contract the H1N1 virus. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the risk of severe illness is higher for infants simultaneously infected with a second virus, such as, for example, Respiratory Syncytial Virus." Countless babies contract this virus – called RSV for short – every year, the virologist says. "Dual infection with RSV and the H1N1 virus might result in severe manifestations of disease because both these viruses can infect the lower respiratory tract, especially in young children. Preterm infants whose lungs and other body systems haven't fully developed are especially at risk."

### **Concerned parents can find out more from their pediatrician.**

The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) is a network for patients and their families, but also a forum for scientists working toward long-term improvement of care for preterm and sick newborns – helping Europe's largest population of sick children to get the attention and lobby they deserve. More information is available at [www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)

For more press releases, contact:

Petra Schönhöfer

COMEO Public Relations  
Hofmannstr. 7A, 81379 München  
Tel: +49 (089) 74 888 2-36  
E-mail: [schoenhoefer@comeo.de](mailto:schoenhoefer@comeo.de)  
[www.comeo.de](http://www.comeo.de)

Silke Mader

Executive Chairperson  
EFCNI  
Würmanger 5, 85757 Karlsfeld, Germany  
Tel: +49 (08131) 90 85 59 or 0170/1695604  
[silke.mader@efcni.org](mailto:silke.mader@efcni.org)  
[www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)

Würmanger 5  
85757 Karlsfeld  
Tel: 08131/908559  
Fax: 08131/614311  
[info@efcni.com](mailto:info@efcni.com)  
[www.efcni.com](http://www.efcni.com)

Pictures:

Prof. Ortwin Adams,

Department of Virology, Düsseldorf University



Prof. Christian Poets, Neonatologist at

Tübingen University and member of the EFCNI's Political  
Advisory Board



Würmanger 5  
85757 Karlsfeld  
Tel: 08131/908559  
Fax: 08131/614311  
info@efcni.com  
www.efcni.com