



HOCKEY CANADA

INFORMATION BULLETIN D'INFORMATION

Bulletin No.: I10-03

To: Officers
Branch Presidents
Branch Executive Directors
Council Representatives
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HDC Rep (10/02))
Hockey Canada Staff

Date: September 9, 2009

From: Dr. Mark Aubry, Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: H1N1 Virus – Recommended Steps for all Associations and Teams

Ladies and Gentlemen:

There is presently much speculation as to the impact that the H1N1 virus will have on Canadians over the next few months. Organizations have been urged to stress to their members steps that should be taken to prevent the spread of the virus, and to have plans in place to alleviate any hardships that may come of the spread of H1N1.

Hockey Canada has for many years had specific steps in place to reduce the spread of any infection in the hockey environment and we urge you to remind your teams of the following.

Team staff need to emphasize to players and parents the need for total cooperation in all aspects concerning hygiene, but specifically to the prevention of the transmission of the H1N1 virus. The following are recommended steps within the team environment:

1. Players should be urged to report all illnesses to their parents and the Safety Person/Trainer. **Parents are urged to keep their children away from the hockey environment if they are showing any signs of infectious disease or virus. Sick players are encouraged to see their physician if showing signs or symptoms of the H1N1 virus, and to be fully recovered prior to returning to play.**

2. Players should be encouraged to wash hands routinely and always after handling hockey equipment. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is one of the best preventions we can recommend. Teams are encouraged to carry extra hand soap or hand sanitizer as not all arenas have this readily available.
3. Talk to your players about covering their mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing using their arm as opposed to their hands.
4. Advise players to try and not touch their own mouths or nose when in the hockey environment to reduce the chance of them passing an infection on to themselves.
5. Ensure all players and staff have **their own water bottles labeled with names and players numbers.** Sport drink bottles should be avoided as direct lip contact is possible when drinking.
6. Officials and coaches should avoid drinking from other players water bottles and have water readily available to them on their perspective benches.
7. Towels should be removed from all benches. Players should not share towels, clothing, bar soap or other personal items such as razors.
8. Assist athletes in protecting their immune system by stressing they get sufficient sleep, that they do not over train and that they get proper nutrition.

Attached to this Bulletin you will find important information on the H1N1 virus and we suggest distributing this to your team's staff and parents for their information. You may find additional information on the Health Canada website at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>, or on your applicable Provincial/Territorial sites.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Todd Jackson, Senior Manager Safety and Insurance at tjackson@hockeycanada.ca.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Aubry
CMO, Hockey Canada

What you need to know about Influenza A (swine flu)

No doubt you've heard about the swine flu (recently renamed *Influenza A*) outbreak that is currently spreading around the world. There is a lot of information and potential for misinformation across the different forms of media. Here are some facts about Influenza A to give you some peace of mind and help you develop a plan for you and your family.

What is Influenza A? The swine influenza (H1N1) is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza that affects pigs but does not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with Influenza A have occurred, most commonly with persons in direct exposure to pigs. With this recent outbreak, it appears human-to-human spread is occurring. Just like other types of influenzas the virus can spread through liquid droplets that get airborne from coughing or sneezing. You can also contract it by touching something with the live virus on it and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose. With most influenza strains, the virus can live for up to 8 hours on most surfaces.

What does a Level 5 alert from the World Health Organization really mean? On April 29th the W.H.O. raised their alert from a 4 to a 5 indicating that the virus is known to have mutated from animal to human and it believes a global outbreak of the disease or pandemic is imminent. W.H.O. says the phase 5 alert means there is sustained human-to-human spread in at least two countries. It also signals that efforts to produce a vaccine will be ramped up.

What is a pandemic? A pandemic flu is not your average flu – it's an outbreak of a highly infectious illness on a large scale that is spread person to person. Historically there have been several outbreaks of pandemic flu during each century. During the last century, three flu pandemics occurred, the largest one in 1918.

In the current case of Influenza A, more investigation and information is needed to determine how easily the virus spreads and whether it will become a full-blown pandemic.

What are the symptoms? Influenza A symptoms are similar to those of regular human seasonal influenza. They include:

- Fever
- Lethargy
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing
- Headaches
- In some cases, people have reported a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Does your seasonal flu vaccination protect you? This year's annual influenza immunization, or flu shot, protects against the human strain of H1N1 influenza. The human swine influenza H1N1 strain is different than the human strain. It is unlikely that the seasonal flu shot will provide protection against human swine influenza.

What should I do if I have flu symptoms? Stay home and avoid public places. Before going to see a doctor or medical clinic, call first and let them know what your symptoms are and ask what they recommend you do.



How is Influenza A diagnosed? In order to diagnose it, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 or 5 days of illness (when an infected person is most likely to be shedding the virus). However, some persons, especially children, may shed the virus for 10 days or longer.

How can I protect myself? The Public Health Agency advises Canadians to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze in your arm or sleeve
- Get your annual flu shot
- Keep doing what you normally do, but stay home if sick
- Check www.fightflu.ca for more information
- Check www.voyage.gc.ca for travel notices and advisories
- Talk to a health professional if you experience severe flu-like symptoms

Should I wear a mask for protection? The Public Health Agency of Canada does not recommend that members of the general public wear surgical masks to protect against contracting Influenza A. Evidence shows that this is not effective in preventing transmission of influenza in the general public. People often use masks incorrectly, or contaminate them when putting them on and taking them off, which could actually increase the risk of infection. Instead, we should continue to take normal precautions including washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when ill.

Can I get it from eating pork? No. It's safe to eat pork if it has been properly handled and cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F which kills off most bacteria and viruses, including the virus that causes Influenza A.

Are antiviral drugs available and do they work in this case? Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. If taken shortly after getting sick (within 48 hours), they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of illness and potentially reduce the serious complications of influenza.

Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce but do not provide immunity against the virus. The human swine influenza H1N1 can be treated with two different antivirals: *oseltamavir* (Tamiflu) and *zanamivir* (Relenza).

Antiviral medications are prescription drugs. Initially, they may be obtained from a pharmacy with a regular prescription. There is a national stockpile of antiviral medication, and some provinces and territories also have their own stockpiles.

The good news is that it appears most people who have contracted Influenza A are able to recover on their own, just like with most seasonal influenzas.

Should I cancel an upcoming trip to Mexico or the Southern US? The Public Health Agency of Canada recently issued travel warnings so be sure to check out the latest information (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub-eng.php>). If travelling to affected areas, do the same things you would normally do to protect yourself and others during normal flu season. Wash your hands, cover coughs and sneezes, stay in if you are sick and get an annual influenza immunization (flu shot).

For more information, to book a counselling session, or to access any of your EFAP services our Client Services Representatives are ready to speak with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in English or French. All calls are completely confidential.

1.800.663.1142 | 1.866.398.9505 (en français) | 1.888.384.1152 Hearing assistance (TTY)
604.689.1717 International (Call Collect) | www.humansolutions.ca



FACTSHEET

August 21, 2009

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
Ministry of Health Services

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE H1N1 FLU VIRUS

Influenza is caused by viruses, and is generally spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Here are six simple, common sense precautions that can help safeguard everyone's health:

1. **Stay home when you're sick or have influenza symptoms.** Get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.
2. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue away immediately.** It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from getting sick. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** You can become ill by touching a surface contaminated with germs and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods, and avoid smoking, which may increase the risk of serious consequences if you do contract the flu.

You can call [HealthLink BC](#) at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day/seven days a week to speak to a nurse if you have more questions or are concerned about any illness/symptoms experienced by you or your children.

For the latest facts on the H1N1 flu virus, including back-to-school information, visit www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1.

