

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

By now it can be safely assumed that most members and their families are familiar with proper hand washing techniques, but here are other common sense ways to protect yourself from catching pandemic flu:

1. Consider getting both the H1N1 vaccine and the annual flu shot.
2. Wash your hands often
3. If you use hand sanitizer, make sure it is alcohol based.
4. Cover your coughs and sneezes
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Stay at home if you are sick.
7. Use a regular household disinfectant to wash common surfaces every day.
8. Stay away from other people whom may be sick.
9. If possible, avoid crowded places.
10. Keep good airflow in your home by opening windows
11. Check for travel notices and advisories issued by the government
12. Stay healthy overall.



What should I do if I think I have influenza?

If you feel unwell, have high fever, cough or sore throat:

- stay at home and keep away from work, school or crowds;
- rest and take plenty of fluids;
- cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing and, if using tissues, make sure you dispose of them carefully. Clean your hands immediately after with soap and water or cleanse them with an alcohol-based hand rub;
- if you do not have a tissue close by when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth as much as possible with the crook of your elbow;
- use a mask to help you contain the spread of droplets when you are around others, but be sure to do so correctly;
- inform family and friends about your illness and try

to avoid contact with other people;

If possible, contact a health professional before traveling to a health facility to discuss whether a medical examination is necessary.

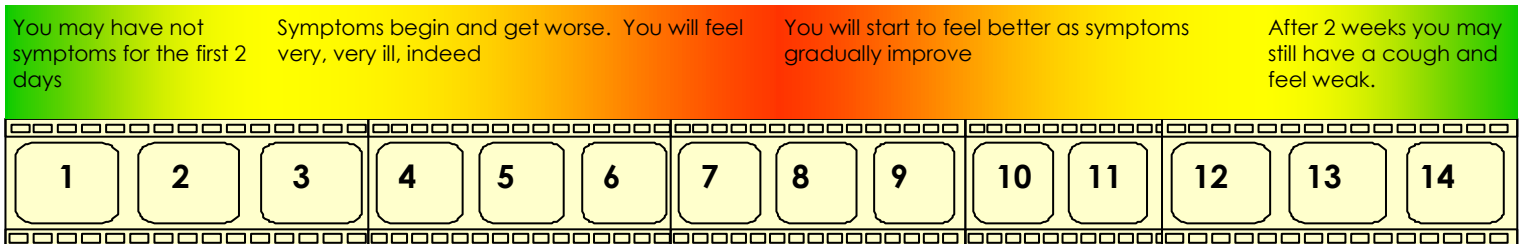
When should someone seek medical care?

A person should seek medical care if they experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or if a fever continues more than three days. For parents with a young child who is ill, seek medical care if a child has fast or labored breathing, continuing fever or convulsions (seizures).

Supportive care at home - resting, drinking plenty of fluids and using a pain reliever for aches may be adequate for recovery in most cases. (A non-aspirin pain reliever should be used by children and young adults because of the risk of Reye's syndrome).

IS IT A COLD OR INFLUENZA?

SYMPTOM	COLD	INFLUENZA
Fever	Rare	Usual, high fever from 38° to 40°C sudden onset, lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Usual, can be severe
General aches and pains	Rare	Usual, can be severe
Fatigue and weakness	Sometimes, but mild	Usual, severe, may last 2-3 wks or more after acute illness
Extreme fatigue	Rare	Usual early onset, can be severe
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Rare
Sneezing	Common	Rare in early stages
Sore throat	Common	Common
Chest discomfort and coughing	Sometimes, mild to moderate	Usual, can be severe
Complications	Can lead to sinus congestion or earache	Pneumonia and respiratory failure or can worsen a current chronic condition; can be life-threatening
PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands frequently Cough/sneeze into your sleeve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual vaccination Wash hands frequently



Are all cases of H1N1 severe?

No. The majority of Canadians who have had novel H1N1 flu have experienced mild illness and have recovered at home. So far, the WHO has been describing this pandemic as moderate.

How likely am I to catch pandemic flu?

You are more likely to catch pandemic flu than ordinary flu because it will spread rapidly and very few people have immunity to it. Everyone will be at risk.

Will the annual flu shot provide protection from pandemic flu?

No. The annual flu shot only covers the strains of human influenza that are expected to be in circulation during this year's flu season. While getting a flu shot each year is the most effective way to avoid getting seasonal flu, it will not provide protection from the novel H1N1 flu pandemic.

Are there drugs to treat H1N1 flu virus?

Yes. The PHAC (Public Health Agency of Canada) says early research indicates that there are two prescription antiviral drugs, Tamiflu and Relenza that are effective in treating the novel H1N1 flu virus.

Antiviral drugs can be used to treat pandemic flu but their use has several limitations:

- To be effective they have to be given within 48 hours of symptoms starting.
- Treatment with antivirals should help reduce the symptoms of flu and the length of illness, but not stop a person passing the infection on to others.

Pacific Blue Cross: Pandemic Influenza, Important information you need to know! September 2009

Is H1N1 actually more deadly?

There was a long-running assumption that a pandemic strain of influenza would be more deadly than seasonal flu. So far, H1N1 is not proving more deadly. But remember, a run-of-the-mill seasonal flu kills an estimated 4,000 to 8,000 Canadians each year. Seasonal flu usually kills the elderly but people over the age of 50 seem to have been exposed to a similar strain of swine flu in the past and have full or partial immunity. H1N1 is killing younger people (ages 15 to 50), which is unusual. Two in three of those who are getting really ill are women, which is also unusual.

I've had the flu before. What's the big deal?

The "flu" has become a catch-all term but it is not a cold, or a gastrointestinal bug. Influenza (H1N1 or otherwise) is unpleasant and will put you out of commission for about a week: You suffer fever, coughing, chills, muscle aches, and extreme fatigue; many people have trouble getting out of bed. The vast majority of those infected will get better with rest and plenty of fluids but, in some cases, the symptoms can be so severe that they can result in hospitalization and death.

How do I know if my flu is the serious kind?

A person who has trouble breathing should seek immediate medical attention, as should someone with persistently high fever (particularly children). What distinguishes swine flu from seasonal flu is that, while most people get a mild form of the disease, some of those who get sick (about 1 in 1,000) get gravely ill. They end up in hospital on a respirator and one in five of them die. H1N1 is also proving most deadly to adults and children.

Can I get the flu from the flu shot?

No. The vaccine does not contain live virus so you cannot contract influenza from it.

Is the H1N1 vaccine safe?

Like every drug, the H1N1 vaccine has benefits and risks. The benefit is that it can prevent infection with swine flu – though the protection is not 100 per cent. The risks for most people are minimal, some redness and maybe a slight fever but in rare cases, there can be serious complications like Guillain-Barré syndrome. But those risks are not unique to this vaccine. And bear in mind that vaccines are among the safest drugs on the market.

Is there anyone who should not get the vaccine?

Anyone with a severe allergy to eggs should not get the vaccine. People with other allergies that can cause anaphylaxis should consult a physician. Similarly, people who are immune-compromised – for example those undergoing chemotherapy or taking inhaled steroids – are not able to generate an adequate immune response so they should not get the vaccine.

If I get the vaccine can I still get the flu?

Influenza vaccines are not 100 per cent effective so, yes, it is possible. However, chances are the symptoms will be more mild. Getting the H1N1 vaccine does not mean you will not get sick this winter; there are other strains of flu and numerous other viruses and bacteria that circulate.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with the flu shed virus and they can infect others from one day before getting sick, to up to seven days after.

Andre Picard, Public Health Report Globe & Mail; October 20, 2009

H1N1 INFO FROM YOUR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

www.fightflu.ca (Canada wide)

www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/ (BC)

www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/influenza-H1N1.html (AB)

www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenza-monitor (SK)

www.gov.mb.ca/flu/index.html (MB)

www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/ (ON)

www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.aspx (QC)

www.gnb.ca/cnb/Promos/Flu/index-e.asp (NB)

www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/h1n1/ (NS)

www.gov.pe.ca/flu/ (PEI)

www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/hsi/default.htm (NL)

If you have questions you can call:

1-800 O-Canada



HEALTH & WELFARE CONTACT INFORMATION

HEALTH & WELFARE FUND OFFICE

IATSE Local 667/669 H & W Fund
3823 Henning Drive #217
Burnaby, BC
V5C 6P3

Toll-free 1-866-366-9667
Fax: 778-329-4454

Web: www.iatse667-669healthplan.com

Plan Administrator: Leta Labiuk
E-mail: leta@iatse667-669healthplan.com
Phone: 778-329-4455

Benefits Coordinator: Mary Miskic
E-mail: mary@iatse667.com
Phone: 416-368-0072



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Health & Dental Claims
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T2P 5P4
1-800-465-2071

If you live inside Quebec

Manulife Financial Group Claims
Health & Dental Claims
P.O. Box 11605, STN Centre Ville
Montreal, QC
H 3C 5T7
1-800-361-2833

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French: 1-800-561-1128

Web: www.myfseap.com

Username: toiatse667-669 password: centre003

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Toll-free from Mexico check the regional code when your arrive—may replace 00 prefix	00-1-800-514-3702
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Toll-free from other countries that participate in Universal International Toll-Free (UITF)*	800-9221-9221
Toll-free in Canada & US	1-877-252-9857
Toll-free Elsewhere	1-519-742-8073

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*Note that this listing is subject to change. For countries that are not reflected on the current UITF, plan members should continue to use the collect number