



H1N1 Policy and Procedures

Key Facts on H1N1 Flu Virus

The H1N1 flu virus is a new strain of pandemic influenza which is different than the seasonal flu. People have no natural immunity to protect against this virus. The H1N1 flu virus emerged in April 2009 and surveillance of its spread shows that it is affecting more young and healthy people than the regular [seasonal flu](#), which normally affects seniors and young children. People with underlying medical conditions and [pregnant women](#) may be at a greater risk for severe illness.

What is it?

H1N1 Flu Virus has been reported around the world, and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has declared it a pandemic influenza virus. H1N1 is a strain of the influenza virus that in the past, usually only affected pigs. In Spring 2009, it emerged in people in North America. This is a new strain of influenza and because humans have little to no natural immunity to this virus, it can cause serious and widespread illness.

How is it spread?

The H1N1 flu virus is contagious and is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza. This happens when an infected person coughs or sneezes and their germs enter the nose, eyes, or throat of another person. The germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, and can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose. It is not possible to catch it by eating pork or pork products or through blood transfusions.

Contagiousness

More investigation is needed on how long a person can be infectious (be able to spread the virus to others), but, it is believed that this period is for one day before the onset of symptoms and continues for approximately 7 days after symptoms have started.

Symptoms

Almost always:

Cough and fever

Common:

*Fatigue
Muscle aches
Sore throat
Headache
Decreased appetite*

Sometimes:

*Nausea
Vomiting
Diarrhea*

Prevention

- The Public Health Agency advises Canadians to:
- [Wash hands](#) often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands.
- Get immunized.
- Keep common surface areas—for example, doorknobs, light switches, telephones and keyboards—clean and disinfected.
- Eat healthy foods and stay physically active to keep your immune system strong.
- Keep doing what you normally do, but if you get sick, stay home.

Check www.fightflu.ca for more information.

Check www.voyage.gc.ca for travel notices and advisories.

Be Prepared

Put together a home preparedness kit *before* anyone gets sick. When you are sick, you won't want to go out and get groceries or health supplies.

Here are some examples of household items that you may want to have in your home:

- Pain and fever medication, like Tylenol or Advil, to treat fever and headaches
- A thermometer
- Extra supplies of any essential medication, like insulin for diabetics
- Cleaning supplies, like household disinfectant,
- Soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer to keep hands clean
- Non perishable food, like canned soup and fruits and vegetables and liquids, like water and juice, in case you can't get to the grocery store

Visit our [H1N1 preparedness guide](#) to learn more about how to protect yourself and your family.

Players in Practice and Competition

- Players and coaches need to wash hands using soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Bring alcohol based hand sanitizer with you to competitions and training where soap and water may not be readily available.
- Do not share water bottles or other drinking/eating utensils with other athletes; Educate players and coaches to bring their own water bottles, suitably identified with the player's name on it.
- Cough into your arm or sleeve. Tissues can be used to cover coughs and sneezes, but be sure to wash your hands after throwing out the tissue.
- Players should be strongly advised to stay at home if any of the H1N1 influenza symptoms are found.

Sportsmanship Practices

The RCBA remains consistent that players can safely participate in the traditional act of sportsmanship of shaking hands at the end of the game. All normal practices are safe, as long as proper hygiene procedures are followed.