

Pandemic Planning

Advice for Parents/Guardians - H1N1 Flu Virus

Local public health units are asking parents and students to follow these precautions to prevent the spread of the H1N1 flu virus in the community.

What can you do to stay healthy?

- 1. Stay home if you are sick**
Students should be encouraged to stay home if they are showing symptoms of influenza (flu).
- 2. Wash your hands often** using soap and warm running water (at least 15 seconds), or use a 60%-90% alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub until hands are dry.
- 3. Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose** to reduce the spread of the virus.
- 4. Cover your cough or sneeze**
Encourage your child to cough or sneeze into their sleeve (not their hands) or to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissues and follow up with hand washing or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 5. Keep commonly touched surfaces clean and disinfected.** This includes counters, fridge handles, faucet taps, railings, computer keyboards, and telephones.
- 6. Protect yourself and others** by talking to your health care provider about seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines.

Symptoms of influenza (flu):

- chills and cough followed by fever
- loss of appetite
- muscle aches and fatigue
- runny nose
- sneezing
- watery eyes
- throat irritation

Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may occur in adults as well as in children. In more severe cases, or in people with chronic conditions, complications such as pneumonia may develop.

If your child shows flu-like symptoms and you have concerns:

- Phone your health care provider or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.
- Please report the absence to your child's school and advise them of the symptoms.

General information on the H1N1 flu virus:

- ServiceOntario INFOline
1-800-476-9708
- Local public health websites:
www.lambtonhealth.on.ca
<http://www.chatham-kent.ca/health>
- Ontario Ministry of Health website:
www.health.gov.on.ca

Resources:

Bug Out! Get the Facts on Germs. FREE activity books are available to families to work through at home. This resources works in support of other age specific resources developed for schools. Download copies from www.redcross.ca or contact your local public health unit for more information.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in Elementary and Secondary Schools.
www.health.gov.on.ca

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