

H1N1 Influenza Virus

Ohsweken Public Health Office
July 16, 2009.



What is H1N1 Influenza ?

- A new (novel) virus.
- Type of Influenza A virus, which has caused mild to moderate illness for most people.
- H1N1 is the subtype of the virus or the DNA make-up of the virus.

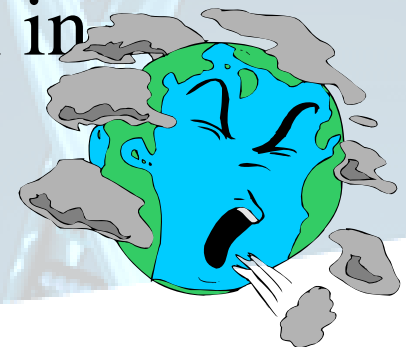
What We Know.....

- Informed of a severe respiratory illness in Mexico in mid April 2009.
- Identified as Influenza A (H1N1) virus on April 30, 2009.
- To date there have been 3, 636 confirmed cases in Ontario (MOHLTC, July 4, 2009).
- Confirmed cases have also been identified in First Nations communities in Ontario, including 1 confirmed case at Six Nations (Six Nations Council Press Release- July 14, 2009)
- People between 5 and 24 years of age comprise a larger proportion of cases compared to other age groups.

What are the Symptoms ?

- Fever/Chills
- New/Worse Cough
- Headache
- Sore muscles/joints
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue (tired)
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea (common in children and the elderly)

If these symptoms become worse during the period of illness, see your family doctor.



Period of Transmission ?

- A person is able to transmit the virus 24 hours prior to symptoms appearing.
- A person is able to transmit the virus up to 7 days after symptoms have appeared.



Testing for H1N1

- Testing for H1N1 is determined by the attending doctor.
- Physicians have criteria which must be met, before they can test a person for H1N1.
- Testing contacts of confirmed cases IS NOT a routine practice.
- It will take from 5-7 days for a test to come back positive/negative for H1N1.

How Do I Prevent H1N1 ?

1. **Frequent and thorough HANDWASHING.**

Use warm water and soap OR an Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR) – 60-90% alcohol content.

2. **COVER YOUR COUGH/Sneezes.**

Use the fabric of your sleeve to cough into or a tissue, **NOT YOUR HANDS** & throw the tissue in the garbage.

3. **STAY HOME** when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, daycare, day camps, errands, social events, sports events– anywhere where there are large groups.

How Do I Prevent H1N1 ?

4. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, infection can be introduced to your body through these routes.
6. Practice good health habits – this includes getting plenty of sleep, eating healthy, drinking lots of water, exercising and no smoking.

Caring for H1N1 Cases & Contacts:

- **Case:** A person who has had a nasopharyngeal swab done and a lab confirmation of H1N1.
- **Contact:** A person who has been in close contact (household) of a case.
- **Suspect Case:** A person who is a contact of a case and begins showing symptoms of the H1N1 virus.

Instructions for Confirmed/Suspect Cases:

1. Avoid contact with the rest of the family by using a separate bedroom and bathroom (if possible).
2. Cough into a tissue or your sleeve, throw tissues away immediately.
3. Wash your hands frequently using soap and water or an ABHR.
4. Don't share anything that goes into your mouth or on your face (utensils, drinking glasses, toothbrushes, facecloths, towels etc.)

Instructions for Confirmed/Suspect Cases:

5. Don't have visitors in the house.
6. Stay at home (work, school, day care, day camps, errands, social/sporting events).
7. If you need to leave the house for medical appointments or need to be within 6 feet of other people – wear a surgical mask.
8. Avoid the use of aspirin and aspirin-containing products for children and teenagers.

Instructions for Contacts of H1N1 Cases:

1. Contacts who develop symptoms should notify their family doctor that they have been a contact and are showing symptoms.
2. Contacts who have NO symptoms:
 - Limit activities in the community to only what is necessary (e.g. school, work).
 - Watch for symptoms of H1N1.
 - At the first sign of Influenza-like symptoms, stay at home, get health care advice and inform your doctor that you are a contact of a known case.

Instructions for Caregivers of H1N1 Cases:

1. If possible only one family member should care for a sick person. ** Pregnant women should avoid providing care to others.**
2. Have as little close contact as possible with the sick person. Stay at least 6 feet away from the sick person, if possible.
3. Wear a surgical mask if you must be in direct contact with a sick person. Remove the mask when you are done care and throw it out – DO NOT reuse masks.

Instructions for Caregivers of H1N1 Cases:

4. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an ABHR after each contact with the sick person and after removing your mask.
5. Provide extra cleaning in frequently touched areas of the home (eg. Table tops, keyboards, door knobs/handles, taps, remote controls, telephones, light switches, hand rails etc.)

How Long Do I Stay Home?

- The amount of time it takes for someone to recover is different for everyone.
- People with Influenza-like symptoms should stay home for up to 7 days OR 48 hours after symptoms resolve.

Use of Antiviral Medication

- Antiviral medications are prescription drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza.
- If taken within 48 hours after symptoms start, they can reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of illness and potentially reduce the serious complications of influenza.
- Antiviral medication is recommended to treat H1N1 flu virus when the illness is moderate to severe and the patient is at a great risk for complications.
- It is the decision of the physician to prescribe antiviral medication.

High-Risk Groups:

These groups of people are at risk of complications of influenza:

1. Pregnant women or women up to 4 weeks post-partum.
2. People with the following conditions:
 - Chronic pulmonary conditions (asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis)
 - Chronic cardiac (heart) conditions. Except hypertension.
 - Renal, hepatic disease. (kidney/liver)
 - Sickle cell disease.
 - Neurologic or neuromuscular disorders (compromise ability to clear airway secretions)
 - Diabetes mellitus and other metabolic disorders
 - Obesity
 - Immunosuppression (caused by medications or HIV).
3. Persons younger than 19 yrs who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
4. Children younger than 5 yrs old. The risk for severe complications from seasonal influenza is highest among children younger than 2 years old.
5. Persons aged 65 yrs. and over.

Vaccine

- H1N1 is a new virus to the human population, so currently there is no vaccine available to the public for this flu virus.
- Work is underway to develop and manufacture a vaccine.
- Once the vaccine becomes available, it will be made available to the community via immunization clinics.

What About Cleaning/Disinfection at Home?

- In order to reduce the transmission of germs and infection in the home it is important to clean and disinfect commonly used/touched surfaces such as:
 - Telephones
 - Door knobs/handles
 - Counter/table tops
 - Light switches
 - Taps
 - Keyboards
 - Remote controls
 - Clean the bathroom daily

Use bleach based cleaners which can be purchased in stores.

Or mix 1 part bleach to 10 parts water to disinfect surfaces.

Frequently Asked Questions...

Why are people concerned about this particular strain of flu?

The H1N1 flu virus is a new (novel) influenza virus.

Since this is a new strain, people will likely have no natural immunity to protect against the virus. The concern is that this strain could spread quickly.

Are all cases of H1N1 Flu Virus severe?

No, the majority of cases of H1N1 flu virus have experienced mild illness and have recovered at home.



Should the public take any extra measures like wearing surgical masks to avoid catching the H1N1 flu virus?

The Public Health Agency of Canada **does not recommend** that members of the general public wear surgical masks to protect against contracting the H1N1 flu virus. Evidence shows that this is not effective in preventing transmission of influenza in the general public. People often use masks incorrectly, or contaminate themselves when putting masks on and taking them off, which could actually increase the risk of infection.

The exception is people who are ill with the H1N1 flu virus or people who are exhibiting flu-like symptoms. In order to protect those around them or those they have to have close contact with (eg. Doctors, nurses, caregivers at home), these people are encouraged to wear a face mask.

If I get sick with the H1N1 flu virus once, does that give me immunity or can I get infected with it again?

Typically when a person is infected with an influenza virus and recovers, they develop antibodies that provide them with immunity to that particular virus.

However, this is a new virus and the PHAC continues to work with international partners to learn more about how it affects people and how it spreads.

How long does a virus live outside of the body?

Viruses can live outside of the body on hard surfaces (stainless steel, plastic) for 24-48 hours and on soft surfaces (cloth, paper, tissue) for less than 8-12 hours.

However it can only infect a person for up to 2-8 hours after being deposited on hard surfaces and for up to a few minutes after being deposited on soft surfaces.

I got my flu shot this year. Will it protect me against the H1N1 flu virus?

It is unlikely that the seasonal flu shot will provide protection against the H1N1 flu virus.

The flu shot will protect against the seasonal flu.

For More Information on H1N1

Health Canada General Enquiries Line

1-877-365-3623 (9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., 7 days/week)

Ontario TeleHealth Line

1-866-797-0000 (24hrs/day, 7 days/week)

Ohsweken Public Health Office

519-445-2672 (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Six Nations Health Services

519-445-2418 (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

QUESTIONS ??



References:

- H1N1 Flu Virus, General Information, Frequently Asked Questions (Public Health Agency of Canada, July 2009)
- Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus in Summer Camps (MOH-LTC, Issue date June 25, 2009)
- Caring for H1N1 Flu Cases and Contacts (Health Canada, May 24, 2009)
- Preventing the Flu – Fact Sheet (CDC, www.cdc.gov, 27/04/2009)