

H1N1 Information for Parents

This year is a different flu season! This fall and winter there are two types of flu viruses circulating: seasonal flu and H1N1 flu virus. Flu symptoms of both viruses include:

Almost Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sudden onset of cough and fever 		
Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fatigue ▪ Headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscle aches ▪ Decreased appetite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sore throat ▪ Runny nose
Sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diarrhea

If your child becomes ill with these symptoms, please keep them home from school until their fever has been absent for 24 hours and he/she feels well enough to resume normal activities.

Here is what to do if your child is ill:

Step #1. Protect yourself and others

- Clean your hands with either soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching items that the sick person has touched (such as dishes, towels and clothes), before you eat and before and after touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If possible, have the sick person wear a mask to control the spread of virus filled droplets. This is especially important, when someone is within two metres or six feet of a sick person. If the sick person cannot wear a mask, encourage the use of a tissue when coughing and sneezing. Dispose of the tissue immediately.
- There is no evidence that wearing a mask will protect you from getting the flu. However, if you wear a mask, wash your hands before and after putting on, or taking off, the mask.

Step #2. Allow the sick person to rest (away from others)

- It is expected that anyone sick with the H1N1 flu virus will need lots of rest and will be contagious for about seven days from the onset of the symptoms -- especially in the first few days.
- Clean items (such as the phone, TV remote) and surfaces that the sick person has touched using normal household disinfectant. The virus can survive on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours.
- The sick person can resume normal activities after symptoms are resolved.

Step #3. Treat the fever and cough

- Fever often comes with chills or aches and pains. Certain medications (such as acetaminophen, for example Tylenol®, or ibuprofen, for example Advil®) may help to reduce these symptoms. Do not give Aspirin® to children to treat a fever, as it has been linked to Reye's Syndrome.



Step #4. Give lots of fluids and nutritious food and ensure a smoke-free environment

- Warm drinks, such as tea with honey and lemon or chicken soup, can be very soothing for a sore throat. The sick person may not have an appetite, but simple foods may be welcomed.
- Cigarette smoking is hard on the lungs of a person with an infection. The sick person should avoid smoking. Second-hand smoke is harmful also, so people should not smoke around the sick person.

Step #5. Keep the sick person's things separate

- Each sick person should have his/her own personal items (towel, face cloth, toothbrush etc.) and they should be kept separate from the belongings of others in the house. Wash your hands after touching the items belonging to the sick person and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Keep common surfaces (door knobs, light switches) clean and disinfected.

Step #6. Stay alert for complications

- When treated at home with proper care, most people will begin to feel better after a few days. Take the sick person's temperature daily to track any fever. Sometimes people with underlying medical conditions – such as asthma or diabetes -- may develop complications and so may need to see a health care provider.

Please provide details about your child's illness (fever, cough, aches, vomiting, etc.) when informing your school of your child's absence.

H1N1 vaccinations

H1N1 flu vaccine clinics will be available for everyone. It is recommended that the majority of school-aged children receive their H1N1 vaccine in the second stage of clinics which will start later in November. Children with underlying medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, etc.) are in the higher priority group and should receive their vaccine as soon as the clinics begin.

Please check your local public health unit for when you and your child should get vaccinated:

Huron County Health Unit: www.huroncounty.ca/health or 519-482-3416

Perth District Health Unit: www.pdhu.on.ca or 519-271-7600 ext 267. Listowel residents call 1-877-271-7348.