



Health and Community Services

Public Health Measures for Pandemic Influenza (source: PHAC, July 2009)

Introduction

This document provides interim guidance for public health officials to use in developing recommendations for the prevention and control (to mitigate the impact) of H1N1 flu virus in the community when there is sustained transmission and widespread activity in the general population (Pandemic phase 6).

The content of this document is largely based on the general recommendations included in the [Public Health Measures Annex M of the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Health Sector](http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/H39-4-26-2004E.pdf) (<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/H39-4-26-2004E.pdf>).

It is recommended that the guidance in this document be used in combination with individual infection control measures such as proper hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (cough etiquette) see http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/hygiene/hygiene_campaign.htm

Guidance for other settings such as hospitals and ambulatory health care can be found at (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/hp-index-eng.php>).

Identification of Cases

The identification of cases and collection of relevant data contribute to characterization of the epidemiology of the illness. However it is neither feasible nor desirable to have laboratory confirmation of every case of influenza. It is widely understood that the identification of a case of influenza is usually associated with the presence of other ill people in a given community, and the knowledge that the virus is present in the community is sufficient to guide clinical decision making.

For information regarding case definitions and reporting of cases, please refer to the Canadian case definitions: [Case Definitions for National Surveillance H1N1 Flu Virus](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/hp-ps-info_definition-eng.php) (http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/hp-ps-info_definition-eng.php).

Information on Laboratory Testing for Influenza in Newfoundland and Labrador can be found <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/hsi/NPswab2009.pdf>

Recommendations for the Management of Cases of H1N1 Flu Virus and their Contacts in the Community

Novel influenza A virus infections in humans, including the new H1N1 flu virus, represent a pandemic threat. Therefore the following recommendations for public health in the

follow up of H1N1 flu virus cases and contacts are recommended in addition to routine prevention and control measures for seasonal influenza. These measures are recommended in order to slow the spread of infection between people in order to limit the disruption that could occur with widespread illness.

Confirmed and Probable Cases

- Should be advised to stay home and minimize contact with others for 7 days after symptom onset (i.e. self-isolation).
- Should be advised to avoid close contact with unexposed household members during the isolation period. As with other types of influenza, an ill person may want to wear a surgical mask when in close contact (less than 2 meters) with healthy persons, or others may want to wear a surgical mask if in close contact with an ill person or use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Should be advised that if case **must** go into the community (e.g., to seek medical care), they should take measures to avoid exposing others, that is practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and avoid crowds (e.g., on mass transit). If available, a face mask may be worn to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in the community.
- Should be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as per current H1N1 flu virus reporting guidelines.
- Should be managed as per clinical care management recommendations in [Interim Guidance for Clinicians in Ambulatory Care Settings](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/hp-ps-info_amb-eng.php) (http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/hp-ps-info_amb-eng.php).
- Should be provided education on infection control precautions in the home setting and instructions about what to do if illness progresses (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/guidance-orientation-05-03-eng.php>).
- Laboratory testing should be facilitated if indicated and as required. Once the virus is confirmed in a community, there is little value for additional testing to be done. <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/hsi/NPswab2009.pdf>

Household Contacts of Cases

- Should be advised to designate a single household member as the ill person's caregiver if possible to minimize interactions with asymptomatic persons to prevent spread. As with other types of influenza, an ill person may want to wear a surgical mask or cover coughs with a tissue when in close contact (less than 2 meters) with healthy persons.
- Should be advised to report to work unless they are ill. If they have been in contact with someone who is ill, they may still come to work. There are no restrictions on people who are well. If you have influenza-like symptoms follow the guidelines for probable cases.
- Should be provided education on infection control precautions in the home setting and instructions about what to do if illness progresses (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/guidance-orientation-05-03-eng.php>.)

Recommendations Regarding Influenza-like-illness in the Community

- Persons who develop influenza-like illness (ILI) (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, wheezing, gastroenteritis, malaise) should be advised to stay home and to recuperate away from others for 7 days after the onset of illness.

- Persons who have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath or are believed to be severely ill should seek immediate medical attention.
- Ill persons at home (e.g., in self-isolation) and their household members should be given advice regarding infection prevention and control practices such as good respiratory and hand hygiene practices (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/guidance-orientation-05-03-eng.php>).
- Ill persons may want to wear a surgical mask when in close contact (less than 2 meters) with healthy persons, or others may want to wear a mask if in close contact with an ill person.
- Persons with underlying medical conditions who are at high risk for complications of influenza should consider avoiding large gatherings.

Recommendations Regarding the General Public

- Educational materials and messaging for the general public should be provided regarding risks and risk avoidance, universal hygiene behaviors (e.g., hand hygiene, good respiratory and cough etiquette) and information to reduce transmission of illness (e.g., when and how to seek medical attention in a way that minimizes exposure opportunities). For more information see: <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/hsi/default.htm>
- Educational materials and public messaging should be provided on self-care including self-monitoring, self-isolation and when to seek medical advice.

Public Health measures summary:

Measure	Rationale
Stay home from public events and locations (e.g. self-isolation) if you have fever and new on set of respiratory symptoms	RECOMMENDED This measure is sensible, feasible and easy to implement, may delay the spread of the disease within the community
Close schools and day care centers	NOT RECOMMENDED but could be implemented for administrative purposes if high attack rates in pre-school or school age children determine that the facility cannot remain open.
Restrict indoor public gatherings (other than schools).	NOT RECOMMENDED as compliance and sustainability is difficult. Cancelling some public services, such as public transportation could cause significant social disruption. Cancellation of public events may not have the desired effect as groups will gather in alternate settings.
Urge entire population in an affected area to check for fever at least once daily.	NOT RECOMMENDED this has not been effective
Introduce thermal scanning into public places.	NOT RECOMMENDED - not effective
Widespread environmental or air disinfection.	NOT RECOMMENDED - not practical
Disinfect clothing, shoes or other objects or persons exiting affected areas.	NOT RECOMMENDED for public health purposes. May be required by veterinary authorities to prevent spread of infection in animals.
Restrict travel to and from	NOT RECOMMENDED once community based spread has

affected areas.	been confirmed
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- General materials for precautions against influenza can be found at:
<http://www.fightflu.ca/prot-eng.html>