

This information is effective and current as of November 2, 2009

Please note that information about H1N1 is changing on an almost daily basis as we learn more about this novel virus. We encourage all PHSA staff to check the [POD](#) and [the PHSA Internet H1N1 Resources for Staff](#) for the most recent information.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

The symptoms of the H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal influenza and include abrupt onset of fever (>38 degrees C orally), cough, sore throat, headache, general aches, fatigue, eye pain, shortness of breath, and lack of appetite. Some people with the H1N1 flu have also reported runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

If an employee has symptoms as listed above, please refer to the [“H1N1 and Seasonal Influenza Process for Symptomatic Employees”](#) flowchart and follow the directions.

I have a medical condition – what do I do?

H1N1 is a community acquired disease. That means you are much more likely to pick up the bug outside of work. Everyone is equally likely to get this illness but some groups – those with underlying [health conditions](#) such as diabetes, chronic heart or lung conditions, asthma, etc. as well as women who are [pregnant](#) seem to be at higher risk of developing severe disease or complications. Early treatment with antiviral medications has been effective in lessening the risk of developing these complications.

If you fall into this category you are encouraged to talk to your doctor and develop a plan should you start to experience symptoms. The [BC Government website](#) has some excellent information for high risk groups.

I spoke with the Health Promotion Nurse already. Do I need to call back and let the nurse know when I'm going back to work?

There is no need to contact the Health Promotion Nurse again unless you've been asked by the nurse to do so. Employees will be responsible for following up with their own supervisor to advise on their expected return to work date.

I'd like to know more about the H1N1 and the regular flu shot.

You can find many commonly asked questions around flu vaccinations on *Immunized BC* and the *BC Government* websites.

<http://www.immunizebc.ca/ImmVacPrevDis/InfluenzaH1N1/fluFAQ.htm>

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/keyfacts/index.html>.

I'm a health care worker. When can I get my flu shots?

The BC Government has mandated Health Care Workers are a priority group for H1N1 vaccinations. However, each geographical health authority's Public Health Medical Health Officer is in charge of the distribution of the vaccines in accordance to the high risk groups outlined by the BC Government.

PHSA's vaccine supply for a given agency depends on which geographical health authority it is located in (for example, vaccines for Vancouver Island Cancer Centre comes from Vancouver Island Health Authority Public Health).

Please check [POD](#) for information on PHSA worksite flu clinics.

A family member is ill with H1N1 and I'm caring for him/her. I'm not sick but can I still come into work?

Any employee who has had recent contact with a confirmed or suspected H1N1 case but is not symptomatic is okay to come to work.

How to Look After Someone At Home With H1N1 Flu Virus: (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/guidance-orientation-05-03-eng.php>).

Advice for Health Care Providers:

- Hand Hygiene before and after any contact with patients/residents/clients or their environment., before any aseptic procedure and after any exposure to blood or body fluids
- Use of a mask, eye/face protection, gloves and consider a gown when caring for those who have a fever and cough during all care and assessments or whenever you will be within 3 feet of them
- Wear an N95 respirator mask, eye/face protection, gloves and gown for any care given during exposures that could be aerosol-generating (e.g. intubation, nebulization, suctioning) and follow all Infection Control guidelines and protocols.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve, not into your hands. Encourage others to do the same.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Take care of yourself: get plenty of sleep, good nutrition, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids and avoid smoking
- If you are sick, stay home and avoid public places to prevent the spread.

Where should I go for reliable information?

- [POD H1N1 Staff Immunization page](#)
- [PHSA external website](#) (now also has a section with H1N1 info for PHSA staff)
- [Immunize BC](#)
- [BCCDC Website](#)
- [BC Government Website](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Canada's Flu Watch](#)

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