

**GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND OTHER
NON-HEALTH CARE WORKPLACES:
Summary of Infection Prevention Guidelines
for Influenza Like Illness (ILI) including
Pandemic H1N1 Influenza**

These infection prevention guidelines are intended to guide employees in non-health care settings.

Some individuals may react to pandemic H1N1 influenza with fear and anxiety. In order to assist people in coping please ensure that these guidelines are shared and supported, and provide staff with access to available support services such as help line phone numbers, Employee Assistance Programs, peer support and other resources.

Pandemic H1N1 influenza is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the seasonal flu. Spread of the H1N1 influenza virus is thought to be the same as seasonal flu.

Influenza spreads easily from person to person when the virus released from an infected person's coughing and sneezing enters the nose and/or throat of another person. The virus can also rest on hard surfaces for a number of hours, where it can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth, nose and/or eyes.

People are usually contagious the day before they develop symptoms and are most contagious during the first three to five days of the illness. Children and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for a longer period of time. Not everyone who gets influenza develops symptoms but they still may be able to spread it to others, especially if they cough or sneeze.

Symptoms of Influenza

Sudden onset of cough and a fever with one of: sore throat, joint pains, muscle aches, fatigue.

Routine Measures to Prevent Spread of Infection

The H1N1 influenza virus is considered to be present in communities throughout Manitoba and in all public settings. The risk of becoming infected with pandemic H1N1 in most workplaces is considered to be no different than that of any other community location.

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Following routine measures can help to prevent the spread of infection:

Hand Hygiene:

- Workers should perform hand hygiene regularly. Soap and water is preferred, however, where soap and water are not available, hand sanitizers are an acceptable alternative if hands are not visibly soiled.
- Scrub between your fingers, on the backs of your hands and under your fingernails. Don't miss the thumbs and rinse hands for about 10 seconds. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- You should wash your hands before eating, after touching common surfaces (ex. door knobs, railings, telephone) and after using the washroom.
- Limit touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Respiratory Hygiene (Cough and Sneezing Etiquette):

- Workers should cover their cough or sneeze, by coughing or sneezing into their elbow or sleeve or by using a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. The tissue should be thrown in the trash after use and hand hygiene should be performed.

Social Distancing:

- Although the risk of becoming infected with H1N1 in the workplace is considered to be no different than any other location where people come together, putting greater distance between yourself and other people and avoiding close contact may decrease your risk of exposure.

Stay Home when Ill:

- Workers with influenza symptoms should stay home from work and limit contact with others until they feel better.

NOTE: The use of masks by healthy individuals in non-health care settings has not been shown to be effective in preventing people from getting the flu.

For most workers, wearing a mask is not necessary or recommended.

General Precautions for Interacting with Clients

- Clients with influenza symptoms should be advised to reschedule their appointment if feasible, or receive service via another method not involving face-to-face contact with a worker i.e., telephone or online service provision.
- Individuals who feel they have been exposed to H1N1 influenza, but are feeling well do not need to stay home from work. However, they should watch carefully for influenza symptoms. If they develop symptoms, then they should stay home until they feel better.

Cleaning:

- In non-health care settings, including workplaces, routine cleaning of frequently used pieces of equipment and surfaces is sufficient.

Where can I get more Information?

- For additional information on pandemic H1N1 influenza, please see: www.manitoba.ca
- For more information on H1N1 influenza and workplace safety, please see: <http://safemanitoba.com/uploads/bulletins/bltn262.pdf>
- For more information on influenza and self-care, contact Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 or your primary health care provider.