

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Media Release

For immediate release: August 25, 2009

Health Unit to work with local schools to promote hand hygiene

In response to the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (formerly known as Novel H1N1 Influenza), the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is working with schools and school boards to keep our population healthy. **Controlling the spread of influenza in the school population can help reduce the overall spread in the community.**

In preparation for the upcoming school year, the Health Unit has planned a hand hygiene campaign for schools within Leeds, Grenville and Lanark counties. This campaign will include presentations to school staff, school resource materials and letters and fact sheets for students and their parents. The main message will focus on preventing the spread of illness by encouraging a school culture where students and staff practice hand hygiene and proper respiratory etiquette.

Parents and caregivers are advised to watch for signs and symptoms of influenza including: fever, cough, runny nose, sneezing, headache, chills, loss of appetite, muscle aches and fatigue, watery eyes and throat irritation. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported in some cases. If your child is sick with these symptoms, please keep him/her home from school or daycare as well as any public place.

Dr. Anne Carter, the Medical Officer of Health encourages the public to prevent the spread of infection by:

- Practicing frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing and coughing
- Staying home from work, school, or extra-curricular activities when sick
- Frequently cleaning hard surfaces including: counters, door knobs, and railings

If you or your child develops influenza-like symptoms, please call your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000). Avoid going to the Emergency Department unless you are recommended to do so by your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the HealthACTION line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685.

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Contact:

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613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853

Presentations will be occurring throughout Leeds, Grenville and Lanark schools on September 2nd and 3rd. To obtain permission to take a photo at a school presentation, please contact local schools directly.