

LEEDS, GRENVILLE AND LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release: June 12, 2009

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PANDEMIC ALERT LEVEL RAISED TO PHASE 6 by WHO

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the pandemic alert level from Phase 5 to Phase 6, signaling that a global pandemic is underway.

This means that there is wide spread transmission but it is not related to severity of illness.

Moving to phase 6 has no implications for local influenza related activities or recommendations at the present time. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit will continue to respond to the local needs of our community and as local conditions change we will update our recommendations. Currently, locally we are not experiencing significant disease transmission and illness being experienced is mild.

As influenza is primarily a community spread illness, the intent is not to control the disease but to slow the spread so that we can protect the vulnerable people in our community (i.e. young children, older adults and people with certain health conditions).

The message remains the same to prevent the spread of infection:

- Practice frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer: after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose; after shaking hands; before eating; before touching your nose, eyes or mouth
- Cover your mouth when sneezing and coughing: cough into a tissue or your sleeve and wash your hands afterwards
- Keep things clean: frequently clean hard surfaces such as counters, door knobs and railings with a disinfectant wipe or cleaner
- If you develop influenza like illness:
 - **Don't go to the emergency department unless you are recommended to do so by your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario.**
 - Stay home from work, school or child care centres
 - Minimize contact with household members
 - Cover your cough and wash hands
 - Practice social distancing by avoiding going out in public
 - Contact your primary care provider if you experience difficulty breathing or symptoms that concern you.
- If you do not have a primary care provider, please call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000

For further information on H1N1, please visit www.fightflu.ca

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