

Warning: Cold Weather Fast Approaching



Get ready for another Canadian winter!

Frostbite and hypothermia are real potential dangers, especially for individuals who are out in the elements for long periods of time, those who have a decreased sensation in their extremities, and for children.

Frostbite is the freezing of skin and the layers of tissue underneath, and usually occurs when temperatures drop below -4° C. Frostbite is hard to feel, so when enjoying the outdoors make sure to check for white or gray spots on skin, or areas that have lost feeling. Sometimes tingling or pain can be a warning sign of frostbite, usually occurring in hands, feet, nose, and ears.

Hypothermia takes place when heat is lost faster than your body can create it. Hypothermia requires **immediate** medical attention. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, loss of memory, lethargy, mumbled speech, and/or loss of consciousness.

Some ways to avoid hypothermia or frostbite this season:

- Keep hydrated with hot beverages that are not alcoholic, or caffeinated.
- Layer clothing, including a wind and water resistant outside layer.
- Cover extremities.
- Stay inside.

H1N1

Notes for Employers

Planning can help minimize disruption to business activities, protect employee's health and safety, and limit the negative impact to the community. The following measures can help protect your workers and ensure continuity of business operations.

- Sick employees should stay home. Review sick-leave policies and consider making them flexible and consistent with public health recommendations.
- Employees who come to work with symptoms or become sick during the work day should be promptly separated from others and sent home.
- Communicate the importance of washing hands often and covering coughs & sneezes. Provide tissues and no-touch wastebaskets.
- Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact. e.g. handles, tools, keyboards, telephones, dishes, coins.
- Avoid crowded work settings: cancel large or face-to-face meetings; space workers farther apart; cancel non-essential travel; promote teleworking; and use staggered shifts to have fewer workers in the workplace at the same time.
- Encourage employees to get vaccinated for H1N1 and seasonal influenza.
- Allow workers to stay home to take care of their children. Encourage your employees with children to plan for child care alternatives.
- Prepare for increased numbers of employee absences due to illness. Cross-train staff to perform essential functions so that business operations can continue.
- Try to change work duties, location, or schedules for employees who are at higher risk for influenza complications to reduce the possibility of exposure. If this cannot be done, allow these employees to work from home or stay home, if feasible.
- Advise workers to check for signs of illness before traveling, to notify their supervisor, and stay home if they are sick.

Source: *Preparing for the Flu-A Communication Toolkit for Businesses and Employers*, Centre For Disease Control and Prevention, October 2009.

Smart Living

for a healthy workplace

Vol.1, N° 3 • November 2009



Healthy sleep habits are necessary for your health!

Sleep is more than "a block of time when you are not awake".

Sleep's distinctive phases throughout the night help you:

- Feel well, rested, and energetic.
- Learn and make memories.
- Maintain good health.
- Function at your best.

Conversely, not getting enough sleep can be dangerous.

Current recommendations of quantity of sleep required for health is:

- Newborns: 16-18 hours of sleep /day.
- Preschoolers: 10-12 hours/day.
- School age children /Teens: at least nine (9) hours /day.
- Adults: seven (7) to eight (8) hours of sleep daily.

Your quality of sleep has great importance too!

For more information, please visit: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf

Healthy sleep improves your:

- **Performance** - To think clearly, react quickly, create memories, and problem solve.
- **Mood** - To maintain considerate, cooperative behaviors/relationships with co-workers/family, and prevent depression.
- **Health** - To decrease risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, other medical problems.
- **Hormone production** - Human growth hormone fuels growth in children, builds muscle mass, and repairs cells and tissue in children and adults. Cytokines fight infections by preventing and quickening recovery.
- **Healthy weight management** - Studies find "the less a person sleeps, the more likely that person will be overweight, have diabetes, and eat food high in calories and carbohydrates".

H1N1... Why It Is Your Business

When you are in the workforce, it is almost impossible not to have contact with people. You can, however, play a big role in preventing the spread of H1N1 in your workplace.

The workplace may act as a "point of spread", where employees can easily spread influenza to their co-workers and to others in the community.

As long as you follow the health hygiene suggestions on the following pages, (and are not sick), it is safe to go to work, participate in community activities and to socialize.

If your co-worker is sick with H1N1 but you don't have any influenza-like symptoms, go about your daily routine as normal.

If you develop symptoms while at work: **go home & stay home.**

Inside this special H1N1 issue: In the Centre pages:

- What is H1N1?
- What are the symptoms?
- How is it spread?
- What should I do if I have influenza-like illness?
- How can I prevent the spread of H1N1 in my workplace?
- When can I return to work?
- How can I get the vaccine?

On the back page:

- Notes for Employers

SUBSCRIBE for FREE

If you would like to receive the **Smart Living** workplace newsletter either in hard copy or by email, please contact Lynda Earl at 1-613-345- 5685 ext. 2215 or email: lynda.earl@healthunit.org



New Workplace Resource from Cancer Care Ontario



The **Promoting Cancer Screening and Prevention in the Workplace Toolkit** was developed with valuable expert feedback from Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association members, Public Health staff, and Ontario Breast Screening Program health promoters. This toolkit consists of downloadable and hard copy (poster and factsheet) resources, and has been carefully designed to improve the adoption of breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening. It also promotes cancer prevention behaviors among Ontario workers by encouraging them to check cancer screening off their "to-do" list.

To access and order the Promoting Cancer Screening and Prevention in the Workplace Toolkit, please visit: www.cancercare.on.ca/workplacetoolkit

**H1N1
SPECIAL
EDITION**

Do you interact with a lot of people? It's all about preventing the spread.



What is Pandemic (H1N1) 2009?

H1N1 Influenza is the sudden onset of respiratory illness causing symptoms similar to those of regular seasonal influenza.

What are the symptoms of H1N1?

Fever (more than 38° C) and **Cough**



1 additional symptom

(sore throat, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, muscle/joint aches, fatigue, chills)

How is H1N1 spread?

H1N1 is a virus and is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, their germs may enter the mouth, nose, or eyes of another person.

The germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters, handles, tools, dishes, and coins, and can be picked up on hands. They are then transmitted to the respiratory system when you touch your mouth, nose and/or eyes.



How can I reduce the spread of H1N1 in my workplace?



CLEAN YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds with soap & warm water. Keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

(gel or wipes) handy at work, home and in your car. It needs to be at least 60% alcohol to be effective.



COVER YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE

Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve if no tissue is available. Throw away tissues after sneezing, coughing or wiping your nose or your child's nose and clean your hands.



DISINFECT SURFACES and ITEMS

Regularly disinfect hard surfaces such as counters, handles, computer stations, and telephones. Do not share personal items or drinks.



STAY HOME IF YOU ARE ILL

Avoid large crowds of people where viruses can spread easily. Stay home when you are sick. Return to work

when your fever has been absent for 24 hours (without the aid of over-the-counter medications) and you are feeling well enough to resume normal activities.



GET IMMUNIZED

Take steps to protect yourself by getting the vaccine. Influenza vaccines are safe and will not give you influenza.

Adults and children six months of age and older should get vaccinated to protect themselves and their families from H1N1.

The H1N1 influenza vaccine is particularly important for people at risk of complications from influenza and those in close contact with them. Priority groups that will benefit most will be vaccinated first. Please check our website: www.healthunit.org

The Health Unit is providing free H1N1 vaccines throughout Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties. For more information about H1N1 and to find out where the clinics are in your community, please go to our website: www.healthunit.org



What should I do if I have influenza-like symptoms?

If you develop symptoms and are otherwise healthy, **stay home from work to recover**. If you become ill while at work, go home to avoid spreading the virus.

Adults & children with underlying medical conditions; children under the age of 5 years; adults over 65 years of age; and pregnant women should immediately contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) if they develop symptoms.

If your symptoms worsen or you experience difficulty breathing or serious shortness of breath, seek medical attention right away.

When should I return to work?

Stay home until your fever has been absent for 24 hours (without the aid of over-the-counter drugs) and you are feeling well enough to resume normal activities.

The presence of a mild cough after other symptoms have gone, is normal. If you have no other symptoms, you can return to work.

If you're caring for someone sick at home ...

- If possible, choose only one family member to care for the sick. Pregnant women & people with medical problems should avoid giving direct care.
- Hold a small sick child with their chin on your shoulder, so they can't cough in your face.
- Wash your hands often with soap & water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after each time you care for the person.
- Perform extra cleaning of surfaces that are frequently touched (handles, phones, light switches, counters etc.).
- If you develop similar symptoms, stay home & call your health care provider or Telehealth if needed.

Seek emergency care if the sick person:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Has continuous diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain with signs of dehydration such as dry tongue or mouth, and/or decreased amount of urine
- Starts to feel better, then the fever returns
- Has stiff neck and is sensitive to light
- Has seizures
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

