

## H1N1: A Guide for Parents

### The flu season is more dangerous this year

The H1N1 influenza virus will make this year's flu season more dangerous. Most people who get the flu will become mildly sick, but all are at risk for severe illness.

### Protect your family: avoid becoming infected with the H1N1 virus

Get the H1N1 flu shot, get the regular flu shot

- All family members over 6 months of age should get the H1N1 flu shot. The shot is free and safe. Any risk from the flu shot is far smaller than the risk of severe illness from H1N1.
- Also get your regular, seasonal flu shot.

Practice good hygiene:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Cover your mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash surfaces in your house that are touched often.

Practice social distancing:

- Avoid large crowds of people where viruses can spread easily.
- Be mindful of the fact that the virus can be transmitted by shaking hands, kissing, and other close social contact.
- Stay home when you are sick.

### What to do if your child gets sick

Most people who become ill from H1N1 will only get mild symptoms such as a high fever, headache, aches and pains, fatigue and weakness, a runny stuffy nose, a sore throat, a cough, and sometimes sneezing. It may take several days to recover.

Treating a mild infection

- Drink lots of fluids with regular doses of acetaminophen to keep your child's temperature below 38.5°C (101°F). Always read the label before giving any medicine.
- To reduce muscle pain, apply heat for short periods of time using a hot water bottle or heating pad, or by taking a warm bath.
- Gargle with a glass of warm water.
- Suck on hard candy, lozenges, or ice chips.
- Use saline drops or spray to clear a stuffy nose.

If you have any concerns, call your doctor or your local public health agency. In Ontario, this is TeleHealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

### Go to the hospital immediately if your child shows any of the following signs:

- fast or difficult breathing
- bluish or dark-coloured lips or skin
- drowsiness to the point where he or she cannot be easily wakened
- severe crankiness or not wanting to be held
- dehydration: not drinking enough fluids and not going to the bathroom regularly
- getting better but then suddenly getting worse