

## H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Virus - Updated

This year it's a different flu season. There will be seasonal flu and H1N1 flu. Ontario is prepared to protect people from both kinds of flu.

What is H1N1 flu virus?

The H1N1 is a new version of the flu virus. It is spread from person to person, and causes the same symptoms as regular flu...

Recommended Steps in a Team Environment...

H1N1 flu virus was first detected in Mexico last spring. Within just a few months, it spread to many countries around the world, prompting the World Health Organization in June to declare the first global flu pandemic in 41 years. The H1N1 flu virus has affected many Ontarians and this coming flu season it is expected to affect many more.

How does H1N1 flu virus spread?

H1N1 flu spreads like any other flu virus, mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People can become infected by touching objects or surfaces with flu viruses on them and then touching their mouth or nose.

The H1N1 flu vaccine is now available

H1N1 immunization clinics will start in Ontario during the week of October 26. However, as the vaccine will arrive in shipments over time, immunizations will start with people who will benefit most from the vaccine.

This includes people 65 and under with chronic conditions; healthy children six months to under five years of age; people living in remote or isolated communities; health care workers; and household contacts and care providers of persons at high risk who cannot be immunized or may not respond to vaccines

The H1N1 vaccine will be available to everyone else soon. Contact your local public health unit to find out when and where you can get your flu shot. [Click here for contact information.](#)

Recommended steps in a team environment

Team staff need to emphasize to players and parents the need for total cooperation in all aspects concerning hygiene, but specifically to the prevention of the transmission of the H1N1 virus.

1. Players should be urged to report all illnesses to their parents, coach or managers. Parents are urged to keep their children away from a sporting environment if they are showing any signs of infectious disease or virus. Sick players are encouraged to see their physician if showing signs or symptoms of the H1N1 virus, and to be fully recovered prior to returning to play.
  
2. Players should be encouraged to wash hands routinely and always after handling sporting equipment. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is one of the best preventions we can recommend. Teams are encouraged to carry extra hand soap or hand sanitizer as not all gym and community centres have this readily available.
  
3. Talk to your players about covering their mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing using their arm as opposed to their hands.
  
4. Advise players to try and not touch their own mouths or nose when in a sporting environment to reduce the chance of them passing an infection on to themselves.
  
5. Ensure all players and staff have their own water bottles labeled with names and players numbers. Sport drink bottles should be avoided as direct lip contact is possible when drinking.
  
6. Officials and coaches should avoid drinking from other players water bottles and have water readily available to them on their perspective benches.
  
7. Towels should be removed from all benches. Players should not share towels, clothing, bar soap or other personal items.
  
8. Assist athletes in protecting their immune system by stressing they get sufficient sleep, that they do not over train and that they get proper nutrition.

Information from Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and Hockey Canada.

#### OVA Stance on pre & post match handshakes

Players can safely participate in the shaking of hands at the start/end of a game. All normal practices are safe, as long as proper hygiene procedures are followed. However, the final decision is left up to the participating coaches whether or not teams shake hands prior to or following the match. There will be no sanctions applied if teams elect not to shake hands.

For more articles and information regarding H1N1, please review the following articles:

[Public Health Agency of Canada - fightflu.ca](#)

[Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - H1N1 Fact Sheet](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada - H1N1 Myths](#)

[Differences between a cold and flu - Cold Vs. Flu](#)

[Toronto Star - H1N1 Is Serious, but no need to panic](#)

[USA Today - H1N1 Flu Experts: Volleyball Halt Handshake Hardly Helps](#)