

Re: H1N1 Influenza

Dear Parent/Caregiver:

H1N1 Influenza Human Swine cases have been identified in Saskatchewan and within the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR).

The current H1N1 Influenza is a new type of influenza strain. It is suspected that it is spread in the same ways as strains of seasonal influenza. Spread occurs by breathing in infected droplets when you are close to someone who may be sneezing or coughing. It may also occur if someone is in contact with something recently contaminated with the influenza virus. Some examples of this would be a person's hands or objects such as telephones, door handles and handrails.

With the confirmation of H1N1 Influenza in our community, Population and Public Health Services (PPHS) asks that all sports associations and sport groups within the RQHR take precautions, as outlined below, to prevent spread of the H1N1 influenza virus.

Youth can safely come to sport activities if they are not ill. Currently, federal and provincial authorities are not advising that sports activities stop. Your sports administration/association staff will be notified immediately if there is any change in this recommendation. To assist in reducing the possibility of spread of illness, we ask that you keep your child(ren) home if they are ill. If they become ill while at sport activities, you will be asked to take them home.

Please also be advised that children and youth who are ill, should not participate in strenuous activities for a minimum of 14 days after recovery from illness to prevent a rare, complication such as myocarditis, which can be fatal. If you are concerned, a doctor may be consulted before your child resumes sports activities.

Here are some important steps to take to prevent the spread of illness:

- **Keep sick children at home for seven (7) days.** Do not send them to activities.
- Teach your child(ren) to wash their hands frequently and completely with soap and water for 20-30 seconds. Hand sanitizers may also be used.
- Teach your child(ren) to cover their mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing, by using a tissue, or by coughing into the inside of their elbow.
- Teach your child(ren) to keep a distance of about two (2) meters or 5-6 feet, from people who are ill.
- Set an example for your child(ren) by practicing the above points yourself: stay at home when you are ill and limit contact with other people as much as possible, wash hands frequently and completely and use a tissue or your elbow to cough/sneeze into.

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More information on the H1N1 influenza virus, and ways to prevent the spread of influenza in schools, is available from the Province of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Health website at www.health.gov.sk.ca or on the Government of Canada website at www.fightflu.ca.

You may also telephone the provincial **Healthline at 1-877-800-0002**.

We thank you for your attention to this important health matter and to committing to reinforcing the Public Health practices listed above which will aid in preventing the spread of Influenza, as well as ensuring that our children understand and practice appropriate hygiene and self-care to prevent and control infections.

Sincerely



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