



REGINA SOCCER REFEREES ASSOCIATION

H1N1 and Influenza Guidance for Members

Influenza is a virus that affects people each season. Many people have been infected with influenza, but with the pandemic of the H1N1 virus, governments and health care organizations are educating people about how to stay healthy. This guidance is not a policy of the Regina Soccer Referees Association. Rather, it is educational material that hopefully will assist the members of the association with choices and decisions they **MAY** be faced with as the outbreak of influenza progresses.

- **Always consult with your health care professional** about specific concerns you may have regarding your personal health and precautions you may consider for your own health.
- Be aware of the guidance and advice from Saskatchewan Health on what to do to minimize the risks associated with an influenza outbreak. This can be obtained from the Saskatchewan Health website www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenza-monitor or from www.fightflu.ca . Saskatchewan Health has also released guidance for Sport Participants and can be found by following this link <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/H1N1-flu-community-events>
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Carry a bottle of hand sanitizer with you and use it when soap and water is not available. This could also be used after the traditional hand shake before and after the game.
- Practice proper cough etiquette. Coughing is a common method of spreading the influenza virus.
- DO NOT share water bottles or personal items such as whistles. Also wash your water bottle often with soap and water.
- Keep your uniforms and equipment clean.
- Make sure you are eating properly and getting enough sleep. Keep yourself strong.
- If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, muscle pain, and weakness let someone in your family know. If you are exhibiting these symptoms, **DO NOT** complete your game assignment. Contact the RSRA Assignor and advise them of the situation.
- If others in the game are exhibiting symptoms as described above, you as an individual must determine your own course of action. Each individual determines their own level of risk that is acceptable and the RSRA recognizes and accepts that. One action would be to practice social distancing – staying at least 2 metres away from others. Another could be acknowledging the players and team officials after the game, but refraining from the hand shake. Other actions could be more severe, but must be done at the discretion of the referee based on the severity of the risk presented. At the furthest extreme, should the game be cancelled, ensure that you contact the RSRA Assignor, advise them of the situation and complete a special incident report.

Remember that awareness and education can prevent you from making decisions based on feelings rather than facts!



GUIDANCE FOR SPORT PARTICIPANTS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PANDEMIC H1N1 INFLUENZA

This guidance document is based on current knowledge and is subject to updates. The document should be read in conjunction with relevant Public Health Agency of Canada information found on www.phac-aspc.gc.ca and SK Health documents on <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenza-monitor>.

Who is considered a sport participant?

Athletes (team or individual), those who attend a gym/club for regular exercise, coach/trainer/therapist, and others who are interactive participants (i.e. parents). Infection prevention and control is a *team effort* and requires all *players* participate.

How can sport participants protect themselves and others from Pandemic H1N1 Influenza?

- Learn how to recognize influenza like illness (ILI) – acute onset of fever and cough and one or more of: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain, or weakness. Vomiting/diarrhea may be present and fever may not be prominent <http://www.fightflu.ca/sym-eng.html>
- Learn how illness is spread – *directly* from person to person through coughing or sneezing. *Indirect* from touching contaminated surfaces and objects and then touching the eyes/nose/mouth.
- Learn when and how to wash hands (i.e. before/after eating, after sneezing/coughing/recreation/ washroom use) <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iif-vcg/wh-lm-eng.php#b>. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating or touching your eyes/nose/mouth
- Cough and sneeze etiquette <http://www.fightflu.ca/prot-eng.html>
- Carry a bottle of alcohol based hand sanitizer and use it when soap and water is not available
- DO NOT share water bottles, even with members of your own team. Regularly wash your water bottle with soap and warm water – rinse well.
- Keep your uniforms clean and let your uniform and equipment dry out as best as possible.
- DO NOT share personal items such as pillows, headphones, towels, toiletries, personal equipment, etc.
- Make sure you are eating properly and getting enough sleep. Keep yourself strong.
- If you are experiencing symptoms such as shortness of breath, sore throat, fever, cough, muscle pain, and weakness avoid sports participation and let someone know (i.e. physician, coach, etc).

- Avoid travel if experiencing symptoms of ILI. Stay home until symptom free to prevent spread to others

Should sport events be cancelled or gyms/clubs be closed?

Cancellation or closure of sport participation due to Pandemic H1N1 Influenza is not recommended at this time. A decision to cancel or close sport participation would be made by public health officials and local authorities.

Steps event planners and club/gym owners can take to prevent the spread of illness:

- If possible/practical, provide assessment of people coming in with or who develop symptoms of ILI at the event. Provide a mechanism for isolating anyone who becomes ill and safe transport from the site.
- Have a process to keep track of clusters (10% or more of population) of ILI and report to public health officials.
- Provide hand wash stations throughout and ensure a constant supply of soap and paper towels. Hang posters showing correct hand cleaning procedure.
- Provide alcohol based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) stations to supplement hand washing stations. Display posters showing correct hand cleaning procedures.
- Ensure that tissues and closed waste receptacles are located throughout and that posters promoting hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette are visible.
- Ensure frequent emptying of waste receptacles – no special waste handling is required for influenza.
- Ensure frequent cleaning (at least twice daily) of high-touch areas with household or commercial cleaning products (i.e. washroom facilities, handrails, telephones, door knobs etc.).
- Face masks are discouraged. Masks can lead to unnecessary fear and wearing one requires training to use it properly. *Improper mask use can increase the risk for transmission.*
- Shared equipment (i.e. sports) should be cleaned between different users and before storage.
- Promote social distancing especially when there are high levels of Pandemic H1N1 Influenza in the community. This can include measures such as:
 1. Maintaining 2 meters distance whenever possible,
 2. Discourage sharing of personal items (i.e. drinking bottles, eating utensils etc.),
 3. Promote alternatives ways of greetings that do not include physical contact – cheer, head nod, etc. Avoid handshaking, high fives, etc.
- Clean and disinfect exercise equipment regularly.

- Increase the rate of ventilation to allow as much fresh air as possible into the gym/facility.
- Have sufficient medical services support at sporting events.
- At an official sporting event (i.e. summer games, Olympics, etc) if athletes/officials become ill refer them for a medical opinion immediately.
- Persons who are pregnant and/or have an underlying medical condition i.e. asthma, diabetes, etc. may be at higher risk for complications from influenza. Extra precaution on the part of the individual is necessary to prevent illness. When cases of illness are high in the community, it is recommended that attendance to the event be avoided. Seek medical attention as soon as possible if illness develops.

If you have concern/questions, contact HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002

or visit www.healthlineonline.ca