

## Pandemic H1N1 2009 Influenza COMMON QUESTIONS

### ■ What is pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza?

A new/novel respiratory virus that affects the nose, throat and lungs. The virus spreads rapidly from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People can also become infected by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching their own mouth or nose before washing their hands.

### ■ What can I do to protect myself and my family from the pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza virus?

- Choose to immunize.
- Clean your hands frequently and thoroughly with regular soap and water. If soap is not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hands. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands.
- Stay healthy. Eat healthy foods and stay physically active to keep your immune system strong. Rest and get plenty of sleep. Don't smoke. Avoid second hand smoke.
- Be prepared. Plan ahead in case you become ill with influenza (e.g. put together a home preparedness kit).

### ■ What are the symptoms of pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza?

As with seasonal influenza, symptoms include fever and cough that starts suddenly, headache, muscle aches, feeling weak and tired, chills, loss of appetite, sore throat and runny nose. Some people may also have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Most people recover from influenza in about a week although the cough may persist longer.

### ■ What should I do if I have these symptoms?

- Stay home and rest. Drink plenty of fluids. Over-the-counter medications can ease your symptoms.
- Avoid close contact with others while contagious (usually for seven days) if possible. Avoid leaving home unless medical care is needed.
- If your symptoms are getting worse, call your health provider or [Health Link Alberta](#) for advice. In Edmonton, call 780-408-5465. In Calgary, call 403-943-5465. Elsewhere in Alberta call toll-free 1-866-408-5465.
- If your symptoms become severe (e.g. difficulty breathing) go to an emergency centre right away.
- Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza can lead to complications for some people, especially infants, children under five, pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions. These people should speak to a health professional if they develop influenza-like symptoms, and seek immediate medical care if symptoms worsen.

## Pandemic H1N1 2009 Influenza QUICK FACTS

### ■ Why is it important to get immunized against influenza?

Immunization is our best defence against becoming ill. It also helps prevent spread of influenza to others, especially people at risk of complications. It will be very important for people to get two immunizations this year; one to protect against pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza **and** one to protect against seasonal influenza.

### ■ Where are immunizations available?

Alberta Health Services will offer seasonal influenza and pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza immunizations to all Albertans over six months of age at various locations across the province by November 2009. To find the location nearest you, go to [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca).

### ■ Where can I get more information about influenza?

- [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)
- [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)
- [www.healthlinkalberta.ca](http://www.healthlinkalberta.ca)
- [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca)

### ■ We're prepared

The Government of Alberta has been preparing the health system and the province for an influenza pandemic since 1999. [Alberta's Plan for Pandemic Influenza](#) will direct activities of the Government of Alberta, Alberta Health Services and other key groups to ensure a coordinated response to a pandemic influenza.

### ■ A collaborative response

Alberta Health and Wellness is collaborating with Alberta Health Services, the Public Health Agency of Canada and other provinces and territories to coordinate its response to pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza.

For more information visit:

#### **Alberta Health and Wellness**

[www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)

#### **Alberta Health Services**

[www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

#### **Public Health Agency of Canada**

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)