



H1N1 and School Sport Events

There is presently much concern as to the impact that the H1N1 virus will have on Canadians over the next few months. OFSAA is suggesting steps that should be taken to prevent the spread of the virus at school sporting events.

Teachers, administrators, and coaches need to emphasize to players and parents the need for total cooperation in all aspects concerning hygiene to prevent the transmission of H1N1. As well, for the health and safety of others, it is important that anyone exhibiting flu symptoms stay home until the fever has been absent for 24 hours and until they feel well enough to resume normal activities. It is not unusual for individuals to experience a mild cough (especially for those with asthma) for days to weeks after a respiratory infection, so a cough in the absence of other symptoms is not sufficient to keep someone away from work or school.

H1N1 Prevention and Precautions

- Handshaking at OFSAA events is prohibited until further notice. In team events, athletes and coaches will line-up as per the handshake tradition and verbally congratulate their opponent.
- If you are sick, stay home until your symptoms are gone and you feel well enough to participate in day-to-day activities. **Any person considering attending an OFSAA Championship, including athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators, should stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms of H1N1.**
- Schools are encouraged to have an isolation and transportation plan for any coach or student-athlete that develops symptoms of H1N1 once the team has left home.
- Players are urged to report all illnesses to their parents and coaches.
- Players, coaches and officials at OFSAA events should have their own water bottle labeled with their name. Do not share a water bottle with another person.
- Players should not share towels, clothing, soap, or other personal items. Remove towels from all benches at the conclusion of competition.
- In sports where mouth guards are used, they should be cleaned after use with toothpaste or mouthwash and then kept in a clean, dry container.
- Wash uniforms after use.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often, and always after handling sports equipment or competing. If your hands are not visibly dirty, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Teams are encouraged to carry hand sanitizer, and have each participant have their own individual bottle of hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face as much as possible.
- Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands.
- Eat healthy foods, stay physically active, and get sufficient sleep to keep your immune system strong.

OFSAA will continue to monitor the H1N1 issue and develop further actions if required. Championship convenors and OFSAA representatives will seek guidance from local public health units to determine proper actions on-site during a championship should the need arise. Teams or Associations will not be sanctioned in the event of withdrawal from a championship due to H1N1.

H1N1 Symptoms

H1N1 flu feels very much like the regular seasonal flu. Symptoms include:

Almost always

- Fever
- Cough

Common

- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Decreased appetite
- Runny nose

Sometimes

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has an on-line self-assessment tool and additional information. It can be found at www.beattheflu.ca.

When to seek medical care

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recommends seeking medical care immediately if symptoms improve and then suddenly become worse. In addition, seek care if you notice 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 easily be wakened;
- severe crankiness or not wanting to be held; or
- dehydration – not drinking enough fluids and not going to the bathroom regularly.

For more information...

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Telehealth: General health advice from a Registered Nurse. Call 1-866-797-0000.

TTY : 1-866-797-0007. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.health.gov.on.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca