

H1N1 Common Sense

Métis Nation - Saskatchewan Health Office



Flu viruses are spread primarily by close proximity and breathing of others who have the virus and by hand contact where the virus may be present.

Preventing illness and managing family members with influenza at home:

- Ensure everyone washes hands often and thoroughly in warm, soapy water. If running water and soap is not available, alternatives such as foaming soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or arm. If tissue used, be sure to wash or sanitize hands immediately.
- Monitor your health and the health of every household member everyday for symptoms.
- If flu develops, identify a separate room in the house to care for sick family members. Collect games, books, movies and other items for entertainment.
- If the sick family member is in a vulnerable risk group (i.e. under 2 years, asthma, cancer, diabetes, etc) that could increase the risk for complications (i.e. pneumonia) arrange for a medical assessment by a health care provider as early as possible and preferably within 48 hours of becoming ill. If you cannot find a health care provider or clinic in your community call Métis Nation Saskatchewan Health office toll free **1.888.343.6667**
- Avoid regular activities such as shopping, school or playing with others until symptoms resolve or 7 days from onset of illness, whichever is shorter.
- Pillows, linens, eating utensils, hand towels, etc should not be shared without washing first. Use regular household detergents and normal wash processes to disinfect items
- Develop an emergency call list. Include child care at home for illness or school closure, and an alternate care giver in case you become ill
- Get yourself and your family vaccinated with the Pandemic H1N1 vaccine when vaccine becomes available

When providing care to sick family members at home you should protect yourself by:

- To prevent direct transmission, while a sick family member is coughing/sneezing step aside, turn away, or move to a distance of 2 m (6 feet). When holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they do not cough in your face. General use of a face mask is not recommended at this time. To prevent indirect transmission avoid touching your eyes/nose/mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer after you touch the sick person or handle anything they have touched/coughed/sneezed on.
- If you are in a vulnerable risk group, wherever possible arrange for other household member to provide care when close contact is necessary. Also, inform your health care provider about your health condition and your caregiver role.
- All disposable items used by the sick person should be thrown in the trash as soon as possible. Anyone who touches these items should wash or sanitize hands immediately.
- Keep common surfaces and objects (i.e. bedside tables, door knobs, bathroom surfaces and faucets, remotes, phone, toys, etc.) disinfected with household cleaners as per manufactures instructions at least daily.
- Have sufficient supplies on hand such as fever/pain medication tissues, soap, household cleaners etc.

**If you have concerns/questions contact Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
Health Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-877-800-0002 for advice.**