



## Wellness Weekly

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### H1N1 INFLUENZA

#### What is H1N1 flu virus (human swine influenza)?

This influenza virus, which was previously called “swine flu”, is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the regular human seasonal flu. The symptoms may include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, lack of appetite, body aches, coughing and sore throat. Some people with this virus have also reported vomiting and diarrhea. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 may cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

#### Is this virus contagious? How does it spread between people?

The virus is believed to be spread in the same manner as seasonal influenza: person to person mainly by “droplet spread.” This happens when droplets from a cough or sneeze are released into the air and then are breathed in by others who are less than six (6) feet away. The virus can also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. The virus can live outside the body on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours. However it should be noted that the virus is easily killed by hand washing with warm water and soap, or with hand sanitizer. Household disinfectants will kill the virus on household items and surfaces.

It is important to remember that the seasonal flu results in an average of 20,000 hospitalizations and 4,000 deaths in Canada each year. As with the seasonal flu, it is important to protect yourself and those around you from H1N1.

#### Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

If you need more information about influenza, please call the [Hamilton Public Health Department](#) at 905-546-2424 ext 2063 or [TeleHealth Ontario](#) at 1-866-797-0000, TTY 1-866-797-0007.

### PROTECT YOURSELF

#### How do I protect myself from H1N1 or other influenza illnesses?

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) recommends that individuals take these steps to prevent themselves and others from becoming ill:

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly in warm, soapy water or use hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze in your arm, not your hand
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected
- Stay home if you're sick, unless directed to seek medical care

### H1N1 INFORMATION FOR MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

For further information about H1N1 Influenza at McMaster, visit the following website which provides information and instructions for the McMaster community.  
[http://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/h1n1\\_flu/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/h1n1_flu/)

*The Wellness Weekly is written by [Deb Garland](#), Healthy Workplace Program Coordinator*

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**Note:** The contents of The Wellness Weekly are intended for general informational purposes and are not a substitute for proper medical advice. Please consult your family physician or health care professional before beginning any exercise regime—especially if you are: pregnant, nursing or have chronic health concerns. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain and seek immediate medical treatment.