



CONSEIL SCOLAIRE FRANCOPHONE  
DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE  
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**POUR DIFFUSION IMMÉDIATE**

## NOTICE TO PARENTS

### H1N1 HUMAN SWINE INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

(September 3, 2009) In an effort to gather the most recent information on the H1N1 (Human swine influenza) outbreak, Conseil scolaire francophone de la C.-B. (CSF) representatives were recently able to obtain, information from Minister of Public Health specialists, the province's Chief Medical Officer as well as Ministry of Education staff.

As in spring 2009, during the initial outbreak of human swine influenza in Canada, Mexico and the United States, we are once again favouring preventive measures.

In an effort to contain the potential outbreak, CSF schools will be taking preventive measures. They also count on the support of parents.

1. All classrooms and washroom facilities will be equipped with liquid disinfectants. Students and staff will be encouraged to use this hand sanitizer and to wash frequently their hands. Washing hands thoroughly with soap and warm water (when available and in close proximity) is as efficient as using hand sanitizer: 20 seconds is the recommended amount of time needed to properly wash with soap (same time as singing Happy Birthday to You two times).
2. It is important to makes children aware of the following public health precautions:
  - Avoid exposing their hands and other objects to their mouth;
  - Cough or sneeze in their sleeve or elbow instead in the palm of the hand;
  - Disinfect one's hand after having coughed or sneezed, or after spitting in a handkerchief;
  - Disinfect one's hands prior to and after eating;
  - Refrain from sharing drinks and food;
3. We insist all students presenting flu like symptoms be kept home until fully recovered. Students who are at school with such symptoms will be sent home or isolated in our infirmary.
4. For more information on the H1N1 influenza, please visit the British Columbia website at: [www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1](http://www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1) . It includes several useful and informative links.
5. To obtain more information on preventive measures, please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada website at [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca) .

The following information, obtained from Health Canada website may also prove useful  
[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/faq\\_rg\\_swine-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/faq_rg_swine-eng.php) :

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### **What are the symptoms?**

H1N1 symptoms are similar to those of the seasonal influenza. They include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, sore eyes, body aches, fatigue, shortness of breath and lack of appetite.

### **Does the provincial government recommend closing schools or other gathering places to limit the spread of the virus?**

The government has ruled out school closures. Parents and CSF staff are asked to remain vigilant and to follow instructions from the Ministry of Public Health. In only outstanding circumstances will the province consider closing one or many schools.

In Canada, decisions about school closures are made by local authorities and under certain circumstances, this may be advisable. Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommends that people who are sick stay at home to reduce the risk of spreading infection. If this influenza virus spreads, people may want to avoid crowds to decrease the chance of exposure.

### **Is human swine influenza contagious? How does it spread between people?**

Yes, this virus is contagious. Since some of the people who have become ill have not been in direct contact with pigs, we know that the virus has spread from person to person.

More investigation is needed on how easily the virus spreads between people, but it is believed that it is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza.

Influenza and other respiratory infections are transmitted from person to person when germs enter the nose and/or throat. Coughs and sneezes release germs into the air where they can be breathed in by others. Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose.

### **What can I do to protect myself from infection?**

The Public Health Agency advises Canadians to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze in your arm or sleeve
- Get your annual flu shot
- Keep doing what you normally do, but stay home if sick
- Check [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca) for more information
- Check [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) for travel notices and advisories
- **Talk to a health professional if you experience severe flu-like symptoms**

### **Is there any medicine to protect ourselves from H1N1?**

Antiviral medicine can be used to treat virus symptoms. It is most efficient when taken at the initial outset of symptoms. Drinking a lot of liquids and resting are efficient solution in the majority of cases. Taking medication to control fever can also prove efficient.

### **When will a H1N1 shot become available?**

It is expected that H1N1 flu shots will be available in British Columbia in November. It will help to prevent the spread of the disease.