

# { General Information }

## Questions about health

For any question about your health or the health of your family, call **Info-Santé (8-1-1)**. Nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer your questions.

## Public information centre

For any other question about influenza A(H1N1), call Services Québec:

Every day: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Québec City area: 418 644-4545

Montréal area: 514 644-4545

Elsewhere in Québec: 1 877 644-4545 (toll free)

For people who are deaf or hearing impaired:

Montréal: 514 873-4626

Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-9596 (toll free)

Visit the Website [www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca) regularly to keep abreast of the situation, and the steps taken and the advice given by government authorities.

Santé  
et Services sociaux

Québec 

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# Influenza A(H1N1)



## What you need to know

## What you need to do

*Protecting yourself,  
protecting others*

Québec 

# Precautions and care if you have flu symptoms

If you have flu symptoms, you can call Info-Santé (8-1-1) or a doctor depending on the seriousness of the symptoms. To avoid contamination, it is important to follow the instructions you will be given.

## Flu symptoms\*

Fever	Usual Between 38 °C and 40 °C (100,4 °F and 104 °F) Sudden onset Lasts two to five days
Cough	Usual Lasts about a week
Headache	Usual and sometimes intense
Achiness and stiffness	Usual and sometimes intense
Intense fatigue	A few days Sometimes longer
Nausea and vomiting	Usual, especially in children under six years old
Nasal congestion and runny nose	Rare
Sneezing	Rare
Sore throat	Rare
Chest pain	Usual and sometimes intense

\* A cold is a more benign infection of the respiratory tract that is often confused with the flu. To properly distinguish between the two, consult the table of symptoms at the following address:  
[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/influenza](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/influenza)

## Rest and limit contact with other people

Rest at home. **Limit your contact** with others until the end of the contagious period, that is, the period during which you can transmit the virus. Limit visits by family and friends as much as possible. Avoid sharing personal items (towels, utensils, glasses and so on). Keep a reasonable distance from the people around you. Limit your travel and avoid crowds as much as possible.

## Use medications properly

If there are no complications or risk factors (a chronic disease, for example), the flu does not need to be treated with medications. However, over-the-counter medications can be used to relieve symptoms. Before using them, read the labels carefully and only take the recommended doses.

Depending on their evaluation of your condition, a health care professional may give you **antiviral** medications. These drugs can help reduce the duration and severity of the symptoms. Take the prescribed medications as recommended.

**Contact your pharmacist about any problems you may have while taking it.**

## Wear a surgical mask to protect others

Surgical masks help stop infectious droplets from spreading when a sick person coughs or sneezes. Therefore it is best to wear a mask if you have a fever and cough and you are in the presence of other people.



# Prevention and protection

**Always apply the following instructions to avoid spreading viruses.**

## Wash your hands often

Washing your hands often is a good way to prevent the flu. The people living with you or providing you care must also wash their hands. Teach children the proper way to wash their hands and encourage them to do it often.

Wash your hands with ordinary soap and water; anti-bacterial soap is not necessary. If there is no soap or running water, alcohol-based gels, foams or antiseptic liquids can be used. These products should contain at least 60% alcohol.



1 Wet your hands with lukewarm water.



2 Apply soap.



3 Rub your hands together for 15 to 20 seconds. It is important to thoroughly wash all surfaces of both hands: your fingers, between your fingers, your thumbs, your palms, the back of your hands, and your nails.



4 Rinse your hands under running water.



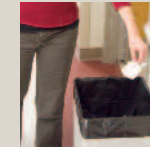
5 Dry your hands with a paper towel, a clean cloth towel, or a hand dryer.



6 Turn off the tap with the paper towel, if available.

## Cough and sneeze without contaminating

When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth, ideally with a tissue. Wash your hands afterward. If you have no tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow or into your upper arm; these parts of the arm seldom come into contact with people or objects.



## Clean your environment

In general, the flu virus can live up to 5 minutes on the hands, 8 to 12 hours on cloth, paper or tissue, and 24 to 48 hours on hard surfaces such as a phone, a door-knob, dishes or a stair railing. Therefore it is important to thoroughly clean all surfaces that are frequently touched, especially in the kitchen and bathroom; these rooms are more likely to be contaminated and transmit infections. Use soap and water or household detergents.

If you are ill, your bedding, towels, clothing and dishes can be washed with regular soap, along with those of other people in the household. However, it is preferable to wash them in hot water.

# The flu an infection to be taken seriously

The flu is a very contagious infection of the respiratory tract. It can cause a high fever, cough, muscle aches and intense fatigue, and prevent you from going about your daily activities for a few days.

## People at risk for complications

For the time being, no specific group in the population has been identified as being more affected by the influenza A(H1N1) virus.

During the annual flu season, some groups of people are at higher risk for complications because of their age or state of health. These groups include:

- very young children (under two years of age);
- elderly people;
- pregnant women;
- people with chronic diseases.

**The seasonal flu vaccine** does not specifically protect against influenza A(H1N1). If a **vaccine against the new influenza A(H1N1) virus** were developed, it would be offered to the entire population. At that time, instructions from the public health authorities concerning the vaccination would be disseminated through the newspapers, radio, television and the Internet ([www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca)).

## How the virus spreads

Influenza virus spreads very easily through droplets from the nose and mouth of an infected person. You can catch the flu if you come in contact with a contaminated surface or an infected person and you then touch your nose, mouth or eyes. Symptoms develop one to seven days after infection. It should be pointed out that a person who has the virus is contagious for 24 hours before and up to 7 days after the onset of symptoms.

The flu virus thrives in cool, dry environments. The virus sometimes spreads when there is contact, such as among people living in the same household, when taking care of someone who is sick, or being in places where people are in contact, for instance, on public transport, at entertainment or sports facilities, or at other public gatherings.



## Don't be afraid to ask for help

The current situation can cause stress and anxiety in the population. Emotions, behaviours and social consequences will vary depending on the evolution of the new influenza A(H1N1) virus. Most individuals have the resources to deal with these situations. However, some people need to be informed or reassured about events or their health.

If you are concerned and need to be reassured, do not hesitate to ask for or accept help. Talk to your family to find one or more persons you can count on to take over if required. Call the health and social services centre in your locality if you do not know anyone who can help

you. You can also obtain information by calling **Info-Santé (8-1-1)** or Services Québec's public information centre at 1 877 644-4545.

## Stay informed

For up-to-date information on the influenza A(H1N1) virus circulating in Québec, listen to the radio, watch television, read the newspapers and visit the government Website at [www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca).

In all cases, follow the advice and instructions given by public health authorities, which may change as the situation develops.

# Contact with a person who has the flu

If you have been in contact with someone who has the flu and you develop symptoms of influenza, such as fever or cough, follow the advice in this pamphlet.

# Caring for sick children

## Symptoms in children and young people

Children's symptoms may differ from those of adults. Be vigilant if your child has a fever and one or more of the symptoms listed in the following table.

0-5 years of age	6-18 years of age
Irritability	Cough
Loss of appetite	Muscle aches
Tearless crying	Headache
Raspy cough	Intense fatigue
Diarrhea	Sore throat
Vomiting	Nasal congestion
Stomach ache	Runny nose
Shortness of breath	Shortness of breath

## Consult a health care professional

Call Info-Santé (8-1-1) or consult a doctor if you believe your child has influenza A(H1N1) virus and he or she:

- is under two years of age and has a temperature above 38°C (100.4°F);
- has a chronic illness or is immunodeficient, and has a temperature above 38°C (100.4°F);
- seems very sick and lacks energy, and you trouble difficulty waking him or her up.

## Give the appropriate medication

- If your child is over three months old and has a temperature above 38°C, you can give the child acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™, etc.), according to the manufacturer's instructions and the child's weight.



- Do not give ibuprofen (Advil™, etc.) to a child under six months old.
- Do not give acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin™, etc.) to a child or young person under 18 years old. At that age, this type of medication combined with the flu can cause a serious disease called *Reyes' Syndrome*, which attacks the liver and the nervous system.

## See that the child is comfortable

Be sure that:

- the child wears light clothing;
- rests;
- drinks enough and does not have signs of dehydration, particularly if the child is vomiting or has diarrhea.

## Follow recommendations

If your child is ill and is of pre-school or school age, it is recommended that the child not be sent to day-care, kindergarten or school until he or she no longer has symptoms.