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For Immediate Release

## York Region Community Flu Assessment Centres: What to do if you have symptoms

### Symptoms of H1N1 flu virus

Symptoms of the H1N1 flu virus feel very much like the regular seasonal flu. Symptoms may include:

- The acute onset of respiratory symptoms with fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius) and cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Joint pain or weakness

If you are experiencing influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, joint and muscle pain, headache) you should stay home until your fever is gone and you are feeling well.

Residents are encouraged to reduce the spread of the H1N1 flu by practising good hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette (cough into your arm or sleeve), as well as by staying home when sick.

### When you should seek medical care?

If you are concerned about your symptoms, please contact your family doctor's office first or call **Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

It is important to know when to get medical help. These symptoms signal a need for urgent care:

- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- High fever in adults that lasts more than two days
- Severe tiredness in a child
- Confusion or difficulty waking an ill person

### Who should attend a H1N1 influenza assessment clinic?

For residents who do not have a family doctor or are unable to get an appointment, they can attend the community flu assessment centre.

***If your symptoms get progressively worse and you experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, go to your nearest hospital emergency department.***

Please note the Community Flu Assessment Clinic will not be offering H1N1 influenza vaccine.

### What is anti-viral and how does it work?

An anti-viral helps reduce the time a person is ill, reduce the symptoms and complications from the flu. If prescribed within the first 48 hours of onset of flu-like symptoms, it can reduce the impact by 50 per cent.

### What to do if your children are sick with flu?

If your child is suffering from the flu, you should seek 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 be easily wakened
- severe crankiness or not wanting to be held
- dehydration – not drinking enough fluids and not going to the bathroom regularly

## How to care for yourself?

If you get the flu, you can do some things to make yourself feel better and avoid spreading the virus to others. Stay home and get plenty of rest. Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, particularly after coughing or blowing your nose. To ease the symptoms of flu:

- drink lots of fluids
- avoid drinks with caffeine
- take basic pain or fever relievers
- do not give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin) to children or teenagers under the age of 16
- apply heat for short periods of time using a hot water bottle or heating pad to reduce muscle pain
- take a warm bath
- gargle with a glass of warm water or suck on hard candy or lozenges
- use saline drops or spray for a stuffy nose
- avoid alcohol and tobacco

## On-line self-assessment tool

To help Ontarians decide what to do when they think they may have the flu, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has developed an on-line self-assessment tool:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/public/tools/assessment/default.aspx>

This tool will help you learn whether you or your child has symptoms of the flu. It will also help you decide what to do next.

Caution should be exercised. This self-assessment tool is intended to provide guidance only and is not intended to provide medical advice about the treatment of you or your child or about the circumstances of your condition or your child's condition. Consult your physician for any questions that you may have about you or your child's condition.

## For More Information

For updated information on this year's flu season, please visit [www.york.ca/H1N1](http://www.york.ca/H1N1) or contact **York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653**.

- 30 -

**Media Contacts:** *Jennifer Mitchell-Emmerson, Community and Health Services, York Region*  
*Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 4016 or After-hours Cell: 905 716-9753*  
*Email: [jennifer.mitchellemmerson@york.ca](mailto:jennifer.mitchellemmerson@york.ca)*

*Patrick Casey, Director, Corporate Communications, York Region*  
*Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 1235 or Cell: 905 715-8211*  
*Email: [patrick.casey@york.ca](mailto:patrick.casey@york.ca)*