

Protecting Yourself From The Flu

You may have heard a lot of information about a new kind of flu virus called H1N1 Influenza. It is always important to make sure you are doing your best to prevent the spread of germs.

Looking for more information related to hosting sporting events and HINI?

The Manitoba Health and Healthy Living website is very good
<http://www.manitoba.ca/flu/summer>.

More information can also be found on the Public Health Agency of Canada website (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/index-eng.php>) as well as the American Centers for Disease Control website (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>) however the information will be similar to that found on the Manitoba Health and Healthy Living website.

At this point there are no specific guidelines concerning athletes, but please consider that guidelines that apply to schools/universities and to travellers will be applicable. It is recommended that any major sporting activity (especially where athletes from different provinces/countries are congregating) should plan for H1N1 influenza, and should have a medical/therapy team that is prepared and equipped to deal with H1N1. The most important prevention measure that can be taken is facilitating hand hygiene by making sure that athletes and officials have easy access to hand washing facilities, including the use of hand sanitizers. Of course, when the H1N1 vaccine becomes available (in Nov/Dec hopefully), then athletes should be immunized. Procedures should also be in place for how to quickly assess sick athletes and isolate them from other athletes and officials while determining if they have H1N1 influenza infection.

Given the current nature of H1N1 influenza, it is not likely that schools will close, unless the number of sick teachers and students is so high that schools are temporarily unable to run their programs. But the proactive closing of schools to prevent H1N1 is not currently seen as an effective strategy.

At this point there would be no need to proactively cancel any sporting events or programs. Again, if H1N1 ends up affecting large numbers of people at once just before or during a major sporting event, so that not enough healthy athletes are available at any given time, then sporting events may need to be cancelled or postponed, but there is no way of predicting in advance if this will be an issue at all.