

Protecting yourself

1. What can I do to protect myself from infection?

In order to reduce the spread of H1N1 virus in universities Public Health officials recommend you:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds – especially after coughing/sneezing and before/after eating
- Proper use of hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol, gels, rubs and wipes if hand-washing facilities are not readily available
- Keep your hands away from your face, mouth, nose or eyes
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into your sleeve or inner elbow
- Do not share food, beverages or other personal items with others
- Maintain a proper diet and get adequate sleep
- Talk to a health professional if you experience severe flu-like symptoms
- Check McMaster's Flu website: http://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/h1n1_flu/

2. What should I do if someone I know or have come in contact with has Influenza-like symptoms?

It is important to note that not all respiratory illnesses are actual cases of H1N1.

Influenza-like illness is the acute onset of respiratory symptoms with fever and cough and one of more of the following symptoms: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain or weakness.

If you have had exposure in the past seven days to someone known to have H1N1 or exhibiting Influenza-like illness, you should self-monitor for signs and symptoms for an additional seven days from the date of contact.

During that time if you are symptom-free you do not need to isolate yourself or take any other precautions beyond washing your hands regularly, and covering sneezes or coughs with tissue/your inside elbow .

If you do develop new symptoms during this time you should stay home or isolate yourself until you no longer have a fever (for a minimum 24 hrs) and are feeling well.

If you become ill

3. What should I do if I don't feel well?

If you have Influenza-like illness – the acute onset of respiratory symptoms with fever and cough and one or more of the following symptoms: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain or weakness, you should stay home.

If you are a student in residence you should notify your floor manager and isolate yourself in your room.

If you are an employee, notify your supervisor and stay at home.

If you develop severe flu-like symptoms you should contact your medical professional.

While at home remember to practice cough and sneeze etiquette and monitor your symptoms for seven days. Do not return to work or school until you no longer have a fever (for minimum 24 hours) and are feeling well. Some individuals may experience a cough for days to weeks after infection. Presence of a cough in the absence of other symptoms should not prevent students, staff or faculty from returning to campus.

4. When can I return to work or school?

If you no longer have a fever and are feeling well, you can return to work or school. If in doubt, consult your medical professional before returning to work or school. Some individuals may experience a cough for days to weeks after infection. Presence of a cough in the absence of the other symptoms should not prevent students, staff or faculty from returning to campus. Employees are required to notify their supervisor that they are able to resume work before they return to work.

5. I am caring for someone who has H1N1-like symptoms, should I stay away from school or work?

If you remain symptom-free you can come to work or class as normal. You should be sure to practice flu prevention techniques including frequent hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes and using hand sanitizers as recommended.

McMaster's Flu Plan

6. What is the University doing to prepare for an expected outbreak?

Click here to read [McMaster's Pandemic Influenza Guide](#) which is available on the Daily News' Flu website provides details of the University's plans. The University plan has been drafted in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care which has provided [provincial guidelines](#) for the prevention and management of H1N1 in colleges and universities.

Education, early identification/self-screening and special precautionary measures are key themes to help minimize the spread of the virus on campus. These measures include:

- Regular updates [McMaster's flu website](#)
- Continuing a [campus-wide educational campaign](#) to [promote hand hygiene](#), cough/sneeze etiquette and other prevention information
- Creating a [self screening tool](#) for H1N1 like illness
- Consistent reminders for those with H1N1 like illness to stay at home or remain isolated in residence rooms until they no longer have a fever and are feeling better
- Installation of hand sanitizer dispensing units in the main entrances of each campus building
- More frequent cleaning in high traffic areas
- Targeted cleaning of push bars on doors, all door handles, all light switches, taps and sinks, photocopier handles and buttons, buttons on printers and fax machines, handrails on stairways, etc.
- Hand sanitizer as well as disinfectant wipes available for purchase on campus in the ABB Scientific Stores ABB-B166, as well as Health Science Stores HSC-4N43. http://www.mcmaster.ca/bms/BMS_PR_Purchasing_Services.htm

7. Will McMaster screen students and staff for the virus?

Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long Term Care is not recommending that universities screen students, staff and faculty for Influenza-like Illness. Students, staff and faculty should monitor themselves for symptoms and take appropriate action.

8. Will McMaster close should there be an outbreak of H1N1?

McMaster is taking guidance from federal and provincial guidelines for Post Secondary Institutions and H1N1 Flu which recommend against the closing of universities and colleges. Hamilton Public Health will monitor outbreaks and will also provide advice and guidance on daily campus operations.

9. Will the H1N1 vaccine be available at McMaster?

It is expected Canada will receive its supply of H1N1 vaccine in late October or early November. Hamilton Public Health will most likely hold a vaccination clinic on campus. Please watch the University Flu website and the Daily News for more information.

McMaster will also continue to offer vaccination clinics for the seasonal Flu vaccine once again this year. Schedules for these clinics will be available soon.

10. What do I do if one of my staff, or students reports to work or class displaying influenza like symptoms?"

Supervisors and faculty should recommend staff and students follow the University's Pandemic Plan and leave work or school if they are displaying symptoms. They should also be encouraged to self-screen for symptoms.