



H1N1 Guidelines

As you may know, H1N1 has caused a global pandemic. While to date most cases of this virus resemble seasonal flu, there have been some severe cases and even deaths in Canada. Young people are among those hardest hit by this virus.

The advice we're giving the general public to avoid the H1N1 virus, and other illnesses, also applies to athletes and those involved with sports in their communities. It is important for everyone, both at home, at work and at play, to follow these simple hygiene tips to help avoid getting sick:

H1N1 spreads mainly from person to person through coughing and sneezing. People can get infected by touching objects or surfaces and then touching their mouth or nose.

Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you to competitions and training as well as festivals, concerts and other events where soap and water may not be readily available. Students should bring their own hand sanitizers.

Do not share water bottles or other drinking/eating utensils with other athletes. Label your water bottle.

Cough into your arm or sleeve. Tissues can be used to cover coughs and sneezes, but be sure to wash your hands after throwing out the tissue;

Keep uniforms clean and dry out as much as possible. Let equipment dry out. Wear sandals when showering

Clean shared-use equipment and common touch surfaces (e.g. handrails, scorers table and console, door knobs, computer keyboards) regularly with household cleaner or disinfectant wipes.

Do not share personal items such as toiletries, pillows, towels, etc.

Eat properly – get plenty of sleep

It is not necessary to cancel any events, games or trips. **The MHSAA Board of Directors is advising against shaking hands prior to or after games or matches. The Association is recommending that at the conclusion of a game, the two teams “give three cheers” for the opposition. The Association is also suggesting that handshakes with officials or referees are not required – a simple nod and Thank you will suffice.**

Another option is for teams to stand at their end lines, and nod to the other team. This is done in Korea, where the girls cross over their legs while standing (like a curtsy) and the boys stand straight and bow in respect.

Schools and teams are reminded to wash their hands prior to practices and games, and immediately upon conclusion.

Athletes, coaches, organizers and support staff who develop flu-like symptoms (fever and/or cough with one or more of the following: sore throat, head/joint or muscle aches, unusual tiredness) should be advised to stay home until they are feeling well and able to resume normal activities. This means that anyone with flulike symptoms should not be participating or attending practices, games or other events.

The H1N1 pandemic is an evolving issue and Public Health recommendations may change. Staying up to date as the H1N1 pandemic evolves is critical.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/flu/index.html>

www.sportmed.mb.ca