



To: Employees of ACC
From: Infection Control/Bette Johnson
Re: H1N1 Influenza
Date: 9-9-09

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have identified a new strain of influenza causing infections in North America (Mexico and the USA), and has now clarified that it is pandemic proportions. This new strain of influenza is Influenza A H1N1; causing many to become ill but has a low death rate. Most cases of H1N1 have occurred in young, previously healthy individuals.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 Influenza? They are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever (greater than 100 degrees F.), chills, fatigue, headache and body aches, lack of appetite, coughing, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. At ACC and according to the ND Health Department we will use the definition of: fever greater than 100 degrees F. and one respiratory symptom (runny nose, sore throat or cough).

How does H1N1 spread? Human-to-human transmission does occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with the flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. A person can spread the disease and be infectious 1 day prior to becoming ill to 7-10 days after becoming ill and/or 24 hrs after symptoms resolve. If a person has come into contact with H1N1, and is going to come down with the illness; they should become ill within 5 days of that contact.

How to prevent the spread of H1N1 Influenza? (PLEASE FOLLOW THESE ALSO TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN/YOUNG ADULTS AT ACC!)

- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue). Throw used tissues into the garbage.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash your hands often; washing your hand and the hands of the children/young adults often will help protect you from the germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Keep your immune system healthy!

- **Keep ill children at home, and if you the employee is exposed to an ill individual within your home, you must then also stay home for 5 days following exposure.**
- You are **strongly encouraged** to obtain the seasonal influenza vaccine this fall. As soon as it is available, you will be notified. We do have about 200 doses reserved for ACC employees.
- When the H1N1 Influenza vaccine is available, it will be given to ACC thru public health. We will then have a tier of individuals to receive this vaccine. This will be the children/young adults we serve and then health care employees, as it is available. All individuals will need to receive two doses 3-4 weeks apart to be fully immunized. According to the ND Department of Health, H1N1 Influenza Vaccine – priorities will be: 1. Pregnant women. 2. Household contact and caregivers for those under 6 months of age. 3. Health Care workers. 4. All those 6 months of age to 24 years of age. 5. 25 – 65 with high risk medical conditions.

What do you do if you become ill?

- If you think you are ill with influenza, avoid close contact with others as much as possible. **REMEMBER SYMPTOMS SHOULD BE: FEVER GREATER THAN 100 DEGREES F. AND A RESPIRATORY SYMPTOM SUCH AS SORE THROAT, COUGH, OR RUNNY NOSE. STAY AT HOME.** Do not go to work, school, run errands, or travel while ill. **Stay at home for 7 days after the start of illness and 24 hours after fever is under 100 degree F without fever reducing medication; whichever is greater.**
- Contact your health care provider. They will determine whether influenza testing is needed or whether you should take antiviral medications. Contact health care provider, about any special care you might need if you are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema. Do not go to the clinic or hospital unless severely ill.
- Seek medical care if you are severely ill such as:
 - Difficulty breathing or chest pain
 - Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
 - Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
 - Signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants a lack of tears when they cry
 - Seizures
 - Less responsive than normal or become confused.
- Contact ACC to notify us of your illness
- Get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Do NOT give aspirin to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

What will we do at ACC if children/young adults are ill with H1N1 Influenza?

- Children/young adults will need to be isolated; either isolation room or cohorted together. They can share the same room and the same bathroom – but should not share a room or bathroom with someone else who is not ill.
- Staff will need to gown, glove, and mask when entering the room of an ill individual.
- If the individual has a tracheotomy or receives a nebulized medication the care providers will need to wear a special N95 mask. The medical evaluation that most staff have completed is for this mask. If you need to wear one – you will need to be fit tested for a N95 mask and employee health or one of the nurses that are trained in fit testing will complete this.

- Pregnant women and those with a severe chronic medical condition will not be allowed to work with individuals with H1N1 Influenza.