

## PANDEMIC (H1N1) INFLUENZA

## Guidelines for Sports Clubs

24<sup>th</sup> September 2009

v1.0

## KEY MESSAGES

Individuals should:

- Stay at home if you are ill
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid sharing water or drinks bottles
- Avoid spitting

Clubs should:

- Display information about influenza
- Provide appropriate hygiene facilities
- Encourage members to follow hygiene advice
- Clean surfaces in clubhouse frequently

***If you are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms - contact your GP by phone***What is pandemic (H1N1) influenza?

Influenza (H1N1) 2009 is a new type of flu virus that can spread easily from person to person. It is called a pandemic because people all over the world are being infected by it.

How does flu spread?

The pandemic flu virus spreads in the same way as seasonal (winter) flu. The flu viruses are mainly passed from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people who have flu. People may also become infected by touching items or surfaces that have been contaminated by droplets from coughs or sneezes, and then touching their mouth or nose or eyes.

**Cancellations:**

*It will not usually be necessary to cancel sports events just because of cases of flu occurring in participants or supporters. If there are large numbers ill, you may have to postpone an event due to shortage of numbers of participants or supervisors - you should have plans in place to prepare for this*

## Further information

Websites

- Health Service Executive  
[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre  
[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)
- Department of Health and Children  
[www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

Posters

- [Information for the Public on Influenza A\(H1N1\)](#)
- [Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette](#)
- [Hand Washing Technique](#)

Helpful Documents

- [Influenza A \(H1N1\): Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Information and medical advice for the public on Pandemic \(H1N1\) 2009 Swine flu](#)
- [Guidance for Caring for Persons at Home with Influenza A\(H1N1\)v](#)
- [Influenza A\(H1N1\)v 2009 Advice for Employers](#)
- [Leaflets and Posters on Pandemic Influenza A \(H1N1\) in different languages: Irish, Arabic, French, Russian, Chinese](#)

## Advice for individuals involved in sports clubs

### How can I help to stop the spread of flu infection?

- Do not attend the club or any activities if you are unwell
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
- Dispose of used tissues in a waste bin after use.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth – germs spread this way
- Avoid sharing water or drinks bottles
- Avoid spitting, except into a tissue
- Avoid close contact with people who appear to be unwell

### How will I feel if I have flu?

The symptoms of pandemic influenza are like those of seasonal flu. There is usually **sudden onset of fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}/100^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and cough or sore throat**. Other symptoms can include:

- Runny nose
- Limb or joint pain
- Headache
- Vomiting or diarrhoea

### What should I do if I get sick with a flu like illness?

If you feel ill while playing sports or attending a sports event, go home as soon as possible to avoid spreading infection to others.

If you become ill while at home, do not go to any sports events. Let your club/manager know that you may have flu.

- Stay at home for seven days from the onset of your illness to avoid spreading infection to others
- Follow the advice above to prevent the spread of infection
- Take medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen to reduce the symptoms
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Telephone the HSE 24 hr Flu Information Line: - **Free phone 1800 94 11 00** - for up to date recorded information
- If you have severe symptoms or are in one of the groups at higher risk (see below) for developing complications, contact your GP/family doctor by telephone.

### Who are those considered to be in high-risk groups for complications of pandemic (H1N1) 2009?

People with: chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver, or neurological disease; immunosuppression (whether caused by disease or treatment); diabetes mellitus; people aged 65 years and older; children <5 years (children <2 years are at higher risk of severe complications); people on medication for asthma, severely obese people (BMI  $\geq 40$ ), pregnant women or people with haemoglobinopathies

For further information on influenza, including treatment and vaccination, visit the HPSC website - [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

## Advice for sports clubs

### How should the club prepare for pandemic influenza?

Make sure that all club members have information about the symptoms of flu and how to prevent it by displaying posters prominently in public areas.

Try to ensure that all club members follow the advice to reduce spread of infection – including hand hygiene, how to cover coughs and sneezes, avoiding sharing water/drinks bottles, avoiding spitting.

Have a plan for dealing with participants who become ill during a sports event, including their isolation from others and arrangements for transport home as soon as possible.

Remind people in high risk groups to contact their GP by phone if they develop symptoms

Have a plan for how the club will continue its activities in the event of large numbers of staff, supervisors or participants becoming ill with flu.

Update your list of contact numbers for club members, staff, supervisors, parents of children.

Provide appropriate hygiene facilities in the dressing rooms, toilets and clubhouse. These should include running water, liquid soap, and hand drying machines or paper or roller towels, and waste bins. Alcohol based hand rubs can be used as an alternative to soap and water.

All communal areas within the clubhouse should be cleaned regularly, and immediately when visibly soiled, using clean cloths, hot water and a general purpose detergent. Particular attention should be paid to hard surfaces that are frequently touched such as door handles, hand rails, bathroom taps, telephones.

### Is it necessary to cancel sports events if there are cases of flu in the club?

No, it will not usually be necessary to cancel sports events just because of cases of flu occurring in participants or supporters. If there are large numbers ill, you may have to postpone an event due to shortage of numbers of participants or supervisors – you should have plans in place to prepare for this.

### How should we manage contacts of a case of flu?

No special precautions are needed for people like other team members when there is a case of flu in the club. Everybody should be aware of the symptoms of flu at all times and should stay at home if they become ill.

### What about washing sports gear?

Sports gear such as jerseys, shorts and towels should be washed in a washing machine using ordinary household detergent. No special precautions are needed.

HSE 24 hr Flu Information Line:  
**Free phone 1800 94 11 00**