

The Camping Association of Nova Scotia  
Proposed Guidelines Regarding Influenza A (H1N1)  
"Human Swine Flu"

June 2009





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## Introduction

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Influzena A (H1N1) - "Human Swine Flu" to be a Level 6 pandemic. Here in Nova Scotia, as of June 19<sup>th</sup>, there have been 98 confirmed cases. As the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection notes, "In most situations the cases we've seen in Nova Scotia have been typical flu-like illness, which patients can treat at home. We continue, however, to take the virus seriously."

As with many illnesses, the young and the old are statistically more susceptible. As a result, the outbreak of Influenza A (H1N1) in Nova Scotia is of key interest to the Camping Association of Nova Scotia. With the camping season upon us, each camp will have to make special considerations due to H1N1. The purpose of these proposed guidelines is two-fold: (1) to state the CANS's position and recommendations regarding H1N1, and (2) to provide a resource for camps to help ensure that campers remain healthy and safe this season. To that end, this manual will provide general information on H1N1; guidelines for the management of H1N1 at camp; a suggested letter for camps to post on their website and/or attach to their registration form; a copy of a hand washing poster; and a copy of a cough-into-your-sleeve poster. Much of this manual has been adapted from the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection's "H1N1 (human swine influenza) Communication Toolkit for School, College and University Administrators," as well as information from the American Camp Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## General Information on Influenza A (H1N1) - "Human Swine Flu"

### *What is H1N1?*

It is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of regular human seasonal influenza.

### *What are the symptoms of H1N1?*

They are similar to those of seasonal influenza including, but not limited to;

- Cough
- Fever / Chills
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Body aches & Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea (in children under 5 years of age)





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*How is H1N1 spread?*

Currently, the virus is contagious to humans; yet, it is not completely understood why the virus is able to spread between people so easily. It is believed that coughs and sneezes releasing germs into the air are a contributing factor. In addition, germs resting on hard surfaces such as counters and doorknobs are easily transmitted to the lungs by an individual touching a surface and then touching their mouth or nose.

*What is the treatment?*

At present, the recommended treatment is the same as for seasonal influenza - stay at home, rest, and drink plenty of fluids. Since H1N1 is a virus, antibiotics are ineffectual. Furthermore, while some antiviral medications have been shown to lessen some flu-like symptoms, at this time the Nova Scotia Department of Health is *not* recommending that doctors write prescriptions for antivirals. As with any illness however, if the symptoms worsen, contact a physician.

*How can you prevent the spread of H1N1?*

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water, or use alcohol-based sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into your arm or sleeve
- Stay home when you are sick
- If symptoms worsen, visit a doctor
- Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, mouth guards, or eating utensils.

*Should masks be worn?*

The Public Health Agency of Canada does not recommend any such measures. It has been demonstrated that wearing masks in public does little to prevent the communication of the virus as people often wear them incorrectly and contaminate them when taking them on and off. This actually tends to increase their chances of becoming ill.





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## Guidelines for Managing H1N1 at Camp

1. Make it clear to staff and campers the absolute need for frequent hand washing, coughing or sneezing into one's sleeve or arm, and not sharing drinks, utensils, etc. An education session at the beginning of camp is recommended.
2. Ensure that frequent hand-washing and general cleanliness is a part of the camp's routine
3. Provide campers with liquid hand soap - not bars of soap - and paper towels in the bathrooms.
4. Print and post hand washing and cough-into-your-sleeve posters at every "hand washing station" at camp. These posters are available in PDF format on the CANS website at <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/HandWash.pdf> and <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/CoverCough.pdf>.
5. Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers in common areas, bathrooms, and cabins. Ensure that such hand sanitizer is also available on out-trips, where applicable.
6. Reinforce usual environmental cleaning practices. No special cleaning regimen is required - just ensure that the camp is cleaned appropriately.
7. Campers *not* displaying any symptoms should be able to go about their daily activities.
8. Camps should consider executing an arrival screening process of ALL camp attendees including staff, volunteers, and campers. If an individual has experienced influenza-like illness (fever *and* cough or sore throat) in the past seven days they should not attend camp until seven days after their symptoms began or until they have been symptom free for 24-hours - whichever is longer. If a camp decides to pursue the arrival screening process, staff and parents should be notified prior to arrival.
9. Educate camp staff about H1N1 symptoms and camp procedures. Camps may wish to hold a training session and/or have staff read this document.
10. Campers who *are* displaying symptoms reasonably believed to be resultant of H1N1 infection should be sent home immediately. Until they are able to be sent home, they should be isolated to the greatest degree possible from staff and other campers. The decision to send a camper home is at the discretion of the camp director and/or the camp's nurse/doctor/health care provider. Camps should remind parents of their right to dismiss a camper at any time. This would be an unfortunate incident; however, it is important to ensure the health of the other campers.
11. If a camper is sent home with H1N1 symptoms, carefully monitor all other campers and staff for symptoms. Until symptoms appear in other individuals, activities should carry on as per usual.





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12. The Nova Scotia (or Prince Edward Island, where applicable) Department of Health should be notified if any campers are sent home with H1N1 symptoms.
  13. At the discretion of the camp director, it is recommended that camp staff does not initiate a discussion about H1N1 with campers at anytime. Extra hand washing and cleanliness is to be explained as "the way of things" at camp. Discussing the matter could have detrimental effects on campers by causing needless worry and concern. It is critical to avoid anxiety stemming from the outbreak of H1N1. However, if campers initiate a discussion about H1N1, staff should be prepared to reassure the campers and answer any questions that they may have.
  14. Staff who fall ill with influenza-like symptoms should be immediately isolated from healthy campers and staff. If possible, the staff member should return home until seven days after symptoms began or 24-hours after last experiencing symptoms - whichever is longer. Camp directors, this summer especially, should strive to ensure that staff is well-rested, hydrated, and fed to ward off illness.

### **Suggested Form Letter About H1N1**

On the following page we have included a form letter that you may wish to use on your website or attach to your registration form. Please feel free to edit and personalize the letter as you see fit. A downloadable MS Word version is available at <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/H1N1%20Form%20Letter.doc>.





Dear Parents and Guardians,

There are confirmed cases of H1N1 (human swine influenza) in Nova Scotia.

H1N1 (human swine influenza) is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of regular human seasonal influenza. The virus is spread by germs that are released into the air by coughs and sneezes and breathed in by others.

Typical symptoms include:

- Cough
- Fever / Chills
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Body aches / Headache
- Vomiting and Diarrhea (in children under 5 years of age)

The best prevention against H1N1 (human swine influenza) is to:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into your arm or sleeve
- Stay home if you are sick
- If your symptoms worsen, visit your doctor or a walk-in clinic
- Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, mouth guards or eating utensils

If you or your camper have influenza-like symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has H1N1 (human swine influenza), it is important to avoid close contact with others for seven days after your symptoms start. We realize that this may mean that your camper may have to attend a later camp. This is the time however, when the illness can be spread to others. It is critical to the health and safety of the other campers, as well as the staff, that your camper recovers at home. Also, please be sure to visit a physician if symptoms worsen.

If you are experiencing influenza-like symptoms, but have *not* been exposed to H1N1 (human swine influenza), either through recent travel to an affected area or contact with someone who has it, treat it as you would normal seasonal influenza. Stay home, rest and drink plenty of fluids. Again, if symptoms worsen, visit your doctor or a walk-in clinic.

Camps across the province are planning to operate as per usual this summer. Nevertheless, all camps will be taking extra precautions to help ensure the health and safety of everyone at camp. If you would like to review the Camping Association's Policy concerning H1N1 (human swine influenza), it can be viewed at <http://www.campingns.ca/members/cans-swine-flu-policy>. Furthermore, if you have any questions regarding our precautions against H1N1, please feel free to contact our Camp Director, [First Name] [Last Name], at [(902) 555-5555] or [firstnamelastname@domain.ca]. In addition the provincial government has made additional information on H1N1 (human swine influenza) available by visiting [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp) or calling toll-free: 1-888-451-4222.

We thank you for your understanding.

Happy & Healthy Camping,

Camp Director





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## Concluding Remarks

Every year, there is a new challenge of some kind at every camp across the province. This year, every camp will be forced to contend with the realities, dangers, and risks of Influenza A (H1N1) - "Human Swine Flu." The Camping Association of Nova Scotia is confident that each camp will be able to rise to the challenge in their own way to ensure the continued health and safety of both campers and staff alike. This document is by no means a "rule book." Nevertheless, it is a strong suggestion of some steps that camps may wish to take in an effort to be continually proactive in matters of health and safety. If you have any questions about this policy manual please feel free to contact the Camping Association of Nova Scotia and/or their Summer Coordinator for 2009, Mr. Scott Matheson. Contact information for CANS as well as several useful website links are below. We thank you for your interest and concern for the health and safety of campers from Sydney to Yarmouth to Amherst and across the Northumberland Strait.

*Have a great 2009 season!*

## Camping Association of Nova Scotia Contact Information

P.O. Box 33039  
Halifax, NS  
B3L 4T6  
Telephone: (902) 425-5454 ext 431  
Email: info@campingNS.ca

Scott Matheson - 2009 CANS Summer Coordinator  
Email: s.matheson@mac.com (or the above address / telephone number)

## Links:

Hand Washing Poster: <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/HandWash.pdf>

Coughing Poster: <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/CoverCough.pdf>

H1N1 Form Letter: <http://www.campingns.ca/uploads/Swine%20Flu%20Materials/H1N1%20Form%20Letter.doc>

Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection Site About H1N1 - Human Swine Flu: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/h1n1-influenza.asp>

American Camping Association's Website on H1N1 - Human Swine Flu:  
[http://www.acacamps.org/hottopics/swine\\_flu.php](http://www.acacamps.org/hottopics/swine_flu.php)

The American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Webpage on Camps and H1N1 - Human Swine Flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/camp.htm>

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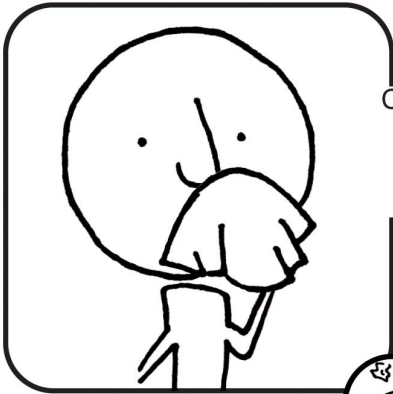
# Wipe Out Germs— Wash with Soap!



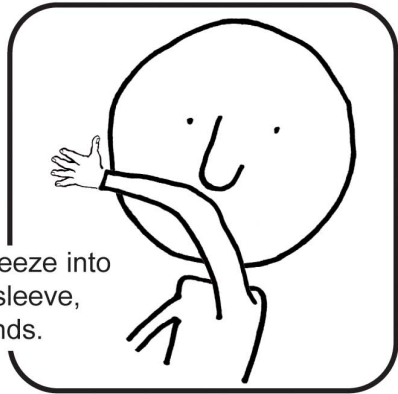
**Wash hands before eating, after play,  
and after using the toilet!**

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

# Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze *or* cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

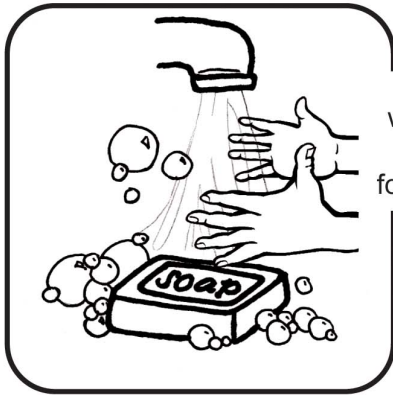


Put your used tissue in the waste basket.



# Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds

*or*  
clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

