

Faculty of Pharmacy

Student (H1N1) Influenza Information Bulletin

September 14, 2009

The following information provides some baseline information on the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus, and guidelines in the event that you experience symptoms consistent with H1N1 influenza. Please take time to review this material, and file it away for future reference. This document will also be available on the Faculty of Pharmacy URL: (<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/pharmacy/>). Should you have questions about any of the issues addressed, please contact the Faculty Office.

1. How will the Faculty communicate with me about H1N1

We will be communicating Faculty specific information about the second wave of the H1N1 virus, as it becomes available. These communications will be by email, the Faculty of Pharmacy URL (<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/pharmacy/>), and by JUMP (for individual classes). Please note that *email communication will be limited to University of Manitoba email accounts*. Please check your email daily, and address any questions or concerns to the Faculty Office or with your professors. Communication by the University on issues related to pandemic planning will be via the University of Manitoba's web site; visit www.umanitoba.ca and follow the H1N1 Flu Virus link.

2. What You Should Know

The pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus has rapidly spread across the world. While influenza activity would normally be expected to wane during the summer months, the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus has not done so and surveillance data suggest that community spread has been continuous. To date, infection with the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus has resulted in symptoms similar to seasonal influenza.

This pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus is thought to be spread from person to person in the same way as seasonal influenza where transmission occurs predominantly through coughing or sneezing. Indirect transmission can also occur through self-inoculation after contact with surfaces and objects contaminated with the virus from infected persons.

Like seasonal influenza, the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza infection in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe, with the most severe disease occurring mainly in known and emerging risk groups such as the immuno-compromised and pregnant women. People with underlying medical conditions may also be at greater risk of severe illness or complications. Most illness from the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus has to date been relatively mild and self-limiting with most cases recovering quickly.

The incubation period for pandemic (H1N1) influenza virus is understood to be up to 4 days and the period of communicability up to 7 days from onset of symptoms in uncomplicated cases. This may be longer (up to 10 days) in individuals with severe illness and children in whom symptoms and virus shedding may persist. Consistent with seasonal flu, transmission of the pandemic (H1N1) influenza virus is most likely during the initial days of infection when the individual is symptomatic and has a high viral load.

The information included in this bulletin is current as of the printed date. New and additional information will be provided as it becomes available. Students should also review the following internet sources for new information:

- U of M pandemic planning web site: www.umanitoba.ca/pandemic;
- Province of Manitoba: www.gov.mb.ca/flu;
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): www.fightflu.ca.

3. What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza

To date, infection with the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus has resulted in symptoms similar to seasonal influenza. These include:

- Acute fever, which is usually high, but unlike seasonal flu may not be prominent
- cough
- runny nose or stuffy nose
- sore throat
- body aches and joint pain
- headache
- fatigue or tiredness, which can be extreme
- diarrhea and vomiting, sometimes, but more commonly seen than with seasonal influenza.

4. If you experience symptoms of H1N1 influenza

- a) Stay home from school and/or work and limit unnecessary contact with others until symptoms abate. Please note that faculty and staff can, and have been requested to ask anyone exhibiting obvious respiratory symptoms to leave the class and not return until symptoms abate. It is preferable that you apply sensible personal judgment in this regard, rather than wait to be identified by a third party, by which time you may have infected others in the program.
- b) Contact your health-care provider or visit your nearest health-care centre if you are concerned that you may need care—especially if your symptoms are severe or worsening (e.g., shortness of breath, dehydration, or worsening fever, cough or weakness).
- c) Students seeking medical advice can contact University Health Services (UHS) by calling (204) 474-8411 or visit their web site: www.umanitoba.ca/student/health.
- d) For personal advice on self-care or when to seek further care, those who cannot contact their primary health-care provider can phone Health Links–Info Santé at any time at 788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

5. If you absent yourself from class

If you need to absent yourself from your studies because of influenza-like symptoms, please note the following:

- a) Contact the Faculty Office (by email or phone; *see Section 6*) and notify us of your absence. Staff will ensure that the appropriate subject coordinators, experiential sites, and professors are made aware of your absence. *Please ensure you provide your telephone number (in the event we need to contact you during your convalescence), and address.*
- b) *You will not be required* to produce a medical certificate in support of a decision to absent yourself from classes *because of influenza-like symptoms*. In the majority of cases such symptoms will be mild, and will not require consultation with a health-care provider. We do not want to encourage

any unnecessarily use of scarce health-care resources, or exposure of others attending these facilities.

- c) When you return to the Faculty, please inform your professors and/or the Faculty Office (**in person, by email, or by phone—see Section 1**). If you notify the Faculty Office, staff will ensure that your professors are notified.

6. How do I contact the Faculty Office

For general information and questions, or, if you need to absent yourself from class(es) (see *Section 5*) because you are experiencing symptoms of H1N1 influenza (see *Section 3*) contact the Faculty Office as follows:

Phone: 474-9306 (After hours, leave a voicemail message)

E-mail: pharmacy@umanitoba.ca

In person: Office hours are 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

7. Protecting yourself and others

Whether you have influenza symptoms or not, you should apply the following preventive measures:

- a) Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. If tissues are not available cover your cough by coughing into your elbow or sleeve. Information on cough etiquette can be found at <http://www.fightflu.ca/prot-eng.html>.
- b) Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing and sneezing. Hand washing with plain soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene. In instances where hand washing sinks are not available, use of alcohol-based hand rubs (hand sanitizers) are also effective. However, if hands are visibly soiled, alcohol based hand rubs may not be effective at eliminating the influenza virus.
- c) Note that hand washing facilities are available in the toilet facilities, laboratories and student common room in the Apotex Centre. Hand sanitizers are also spread throughout the Apotex Centre in the Faculty Office, lecture theatres, and laboratories. Information on hand hygiene can be found at: <http://www.fightflu.ca/prot-eng.html>.
- d) Treat all common surfaces in the Faculty building, or other public places, as infected, and wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- e) Reduce the spread of germs by avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth and (again) by washing your hands frequently.
- f) Maintain your health by taking care of yourself by eating a healthy balanced diet, avoiding cigarette smoke and other harmful substances, being active and getting enough rest and sleep.
- g) Influenza viruses can survive on some surfaces for several hours to days but are rapidly destroyed by cleaning with regular household or commercially available cleaning products. Cleaning of objects and surfaces that are frequently touched by multiple people, high touch surfaces such as doorknobs, faucet handles, computer keyboards, telephones, etc., will help to prevent the transmission of the influenza virus from person to person through contaminated hands.

8. Protecting your studies

You can plan ahead in case you should experience respiratory symptoms:

- a) For several reasons we encourage students to form study groups with colleagues in the same year. Apart from the obvious academic, professional and social benefits, working with a group will ensure continuity of access to notes and handouts (that are not made available electronically) in the event you are unable to attend class. It would be appropriate to let members of your group know if you need to absent yourself, in order that they can provide a comprehensive review of materials provided in missed lectures, tutorials, and laboratories.
- b) Many students live alone or come from rural areas or other provinces, which means they are away from a support network of friends and family. If you are in this situation members of your study group will be able to maintain contact with you, and if they cannot reach you they would be expected to check to ensure you are not in need assistance.
- c) Ask your professors about preventive practices that may be applicable in different laboratories and program areas.
- d) Your professors have been asked to accommodate and be flexible to allow you to complete your course work, and to maximize the availability of electronic course related materials.

9. Course/Schedule Changes/Cancellations

The Dean's Office will notify students about the need for any course/schedule changes/cancellations by e-mail, on the Faculty Website, and/or by JUMP. Again, please review these information sources daily.

10. What is the University doing about H1N1

The University of Manitoba has been involved in pandemic planning and has developed an institutional plan. Deans, Directors, and Heads of Administrative Units have also been requested to develop their own unit plans. A Pandemic Planning Committee is actively involved in overseeing and communicating the planning activities, which includes an awareness campaign and provision of hand sanitizing stations. The primary method of communication by the University on issues related to pandemic planning will be via the University of Manitoba's web site, visit www.umanitoba.ca and follow the H1N1 Flu Virus link.

Summary of Important Points

- Check your University of Manitoba Email Account daily.
- Symptoms of pandemic (H1N1) influenza (see Section 3).
- If you experience symptoms *stay home until symptoms abate* (see Section 4).
- Contact the Faculty (phone email) if you absent yourself from class (see Section 5a).
- Notify the Faculty Office, when you return to classes (see Section 5c).
- Protecting yourself and others (see Section 7).
- Protecting your studies—use of study groups (see Section 8).