

What is Influenza?

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a disease that is caused by a virus and attacks the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs) in humans. Although mild cases may be similar to a viral “cold,” influenza is typically much more severe, usually comes on suddenly, and may include fever, headache, tiredness (which may be extreme). Influenza is transmitted from person to person via coughs and sneezes that release germs into the air where they can be breathed in by others. Germs can also be transferred by hands and on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs.

What is a flu pandemic?

When many people get the same type of flu at the same time all over the world, it is called a Flu Pandemic. In the case of a flu pandemic, the virus spreads quickly, is much more serious than the seasonal flu, and the risk of becoming very ill or even dying is much higher.

What is H1N1 (Swine flu)?

The current outbreak of H1N1 involves a new virus that contains parts from influenza viruses from birds, pigs and humans. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. The symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 (swine) flu.

The World Health Organization has raised the alert level for pandemic influenza preparedness and is calling on all countries and populations to participate in preventing the transmission of Influenza A (H1N1). Vaughan CHC is participating in preventing transmission by screening everyone for flu symptoms at the door.

To get more information and local updates, please visit York Region Public Health:

<http://www.york.ca/services/public+health+and+safety/default+public+health+services.htm>

For information about travel, call 1-800-454-8302 or visit www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

For H1N1 information and resources, please visit www.FightFlu.ca