



## H1N1 Memo to ASAA Schools

**Date:** October 29, 2009  
**To:** ASAA Member School Principals, Athletic Directors, Coaches, Managers and Parents  
**From:** John Paton, Executive Director  
**Re:** H1N1 Risk Management Protocol – School Athletics

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Principals/Athletic Directors/Coaches/Managers/Parents:

The following information is intended to assist ASAA member schools address risks associated with the H1N1 virus. This document will be superseded by any information made available through Alberta Health Services, Alberta Education, your school board or other related bodies. For more information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, refer to the following websites:

[www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca)

[www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)

[www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

There have been a number of confirmed cases of H1N1 (Human Swine Influenza) in Alberta. H1N1 is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of regular human seasonal influenza. The virus is contagious to humans and it is believed to be spread by germs that are released into the air by coughs and sneezing and then breathed in by others. In addition, germs resting on hard surfaces such as counters and doorknobs are easily transmitted to the lungs by an individual touching a contaminated surface and then touching their mouth or nose.

Due to this being a genuine threat in our province, it is imperative that the ASAA and its member schools' athletic teams implement a protocol that is to be exercised by all teams participating this fall. The possibility of the spread of H1N1 will become more apparent as we move into the upcoming months and we want all schools to be prepared at all sporting events, including provincial championships.

Typical symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- Cough
- Fever/chill
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Body aches/headaches
- Vomiting and diarrhea



The following are guidelines for schools to consider as they prepare to minimize any outbreak:

- Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies, such as soap, alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products (60-90% alcohol, if approved by your school board), tissues and receptacles for their disposal
- Develop a dissemination plan for communication with staff, students, coaches, and families (e.g. The coach of the team will contact the student's parent/guardian)
- Prepare to consult with the public health region in your area in the event of an outbreak
- Establish policies for transporting ill students
- Encourage coaches to carry hand sanitizer with them at all times
- Clean shared-use equipment and common touch surfaces (e.g. Handrails, doorknobs, computer keyboards) regularly with household cleaner or disinfectant wipes
- Do not take or let any student athlete(s) or coach attend a mass gathering (tournament) if they are exhibiting signs of influenza-like illness
- Have an isolation/evacuation plan for any coach or student-athlete that may show signs of H1N1 once the team has embarked on a trip

Common prevention guidelines for all to follow:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use approved hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol, if approved by your school board)
- Stay home if you are sick; call HEALTHLINK: 1-866-408-5465
- If your symptoms worsen, visit your doctor or a clinic immediately
- Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, mouth guards or eating utensils
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth unless you have just washed your hands
- Cough and sneeze into your arm or sleeve

The Public Health Agency of Canada does not recommend that masks be worn, nor do they think it necessary to cancel any events, games or trips. All normal practices are safe, as long as proper hygiene procedures are followed.

If anyone on a team has influenza-like symptoms or has been in contact with someone who has H1N1, it is important to avoid close contact with others for at least seven days after your symptoms start. We feel that this is the joint responsibility of parent, school administration and coaches, and it is critical to the health and safety of others as this is the time when the illness can be spread to others. Players who display influenza-like symptoms should be sent home immediately from practice and not allowed to play in games. Until symptoms appear in other individuals, activities should carry on as per usual.



## Athletic Team Guidelines

ASAA is encouraging all principals, athletic directors and team coaches to be vigilant in taking the proper steps to ensure the health and well-being of themselves and their student athletes. Specifically, coaches/team managers are strongly encouraged to:

- Prevent the sharing of bottles among players: put numbers or player names on bottles
- Do NOT allow sharing of towels, clothing, bar soap and other personal items like razors
- Advocate frequent hand-washing and coughing into arm or sleeve
- Carry hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol, if approved by your school board) to tournaments and inform athletes on most effective way to use hand sanitizers for maximum benefit: Click here for proper hand sanitization techniques
- Talk with players and parents on their team about why it is important to keep sick players at home
- Monitor their players and immediately send home those who obviously display any flu-like symptoms
- Advise infected players or coaches/managers to avoid close contact with others (on team) for at least seven days after symptoms appear
- Promote “hands-off-the-face” protocol at all times
- Assist athletes in protecting their immune system by stressing they get sufficient sleep, do not over train and get proper nutrition

Click [here](#) for a one pager to share with your coaching staff.

**Post Game:** Due to the potential spread of the H1N1 virus, the ASAA is recommending that players do not shake hands at the end of each game until further notice. We would still like to have acknowledgement of teams and continue to exhibit sportsmanship, so we advise that teams still do walk bys, or line up opposite the other team, but rather than shaking hands, they clap for their opposing team.

Your cooperation is appreciated and it is hoped that adoption of these protocols will help keep coaching staff, student-athletes, spectators, officials and others healthy as well as the opponents that you may be facing in the weeks to follow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Paton'.

John Paton  
Executive Director