The General Conference Health Ministries Department will be posting bulletins on the H1N1 Influenza virus on an as-needed basis, as this influenza seems, in reality, to be no more virulent than a typical seasonal flu. We will continue to watch for information that should be shared on this site.

Influenza Season

We have received our regular supply of influenza vaccine, and will shortly announce the immunization schedule. This vaccine is recommended, but everyone needs to recognize that this will not give immunity to the H1N1 strain commonly referred to as “Swine” flu.

I would like to circulate to all the following recommendations, based upon the Centers for Disease Control Recommendation for Businesses and Employees, August 19, 2009.

Please note that it is not possible to be definitive when dealing with the unknown; plans and recommendations continue to change, and will probably change yet again from this current recommendation. It is, therefore, important for us to be flexible in our thinking and in our planning.

The CDC will continually monitor the upcoming flu season, and we shall attempt to respond with timely advice as they issue.

We as an organization seek to:

1. Reduce transmission among our staff;
2. Protect those at increased risk;
3. Minimize adverse effects spreading from us to our partnering organizations;
4. Maintain our operations at full capacity.

Depending upon the severity and extend of the disease within our community and organization, and the vulnerability of certain at-risk groups, such as pregnant women, we may have to enunciate specific recommendations.

Depending upon school dismissals and illness among children and family members, we may have to modify our work policies.

**Preparing for the possible epidemic**

We have two possibilities that will call for a response:

1. The epidemic continues at the same severity as in the Spring and
2. A more severe outbreak.

Public health officials who monitor these epidemics will recommend strategies, and these will be posted as appropriate. But we seek to re-emphasize certain general strategies that will hold, regardless of specifics.

**Personal measures**

Let us emphasize once more the simple, proven strategies that may not seem very new, but will undoubtedly NOT be followed by many – whose non-compliance will hurt the rest of the community.

1. ALL – and this means you, and me! – should *stay home* and away from the workplace *if sick*.
2. *Handwashing* frequently, especially after sneezing and coughing.
3. *Cover* all sneezes and coughs.
4. *Carefully dispose of* contaminated tissues (do not use handkerchiefs, unless willing to discard after each use).
5. *Carefully wipe down* all commonly touched surfaces.

**Organizational measures**

Should there be an epidemic of severe illness, measures such as:

- Social distancing – keeping people further apart may be considered.
• Cultural exchanges such as handshaking, hugging, and kissing may be avoided.
• Working at home.

Closure of day care or school dismissals may require adaptation by employers to permit parents to care for the children while maintaining work productivity at home. Human Resources will plan for such exigencies.

Cancelling of large meetings, conferences, and international travel may become warranted.

**Coordination with State and public health partners**

Specific guidelines may vary region by region, as the epidemic may differ in different locations.

**When I have the flu … ?**

Persons with flu-like symptoms should stay home until symptom-free for at least 24 to 48 hours. Symptoms are cough, sneezing, fever, aches, and pains.

We recommend that each department plan how they would manage their work, should the workplace be temporarily closed. This could be because of worker illness or because of school closures.

**Recommendations for those with symptoms**

1. *Contact your doctor/nurse practitioner, BUT*
2. *Do not go and sit* in the waiting room, contaminating others!
3. *Start medication* if prescribed or available promptly, early in the course of the influenza (Tamiflu).
4. *Report severe symptoms* to the doctor, such as breathing difficulty, relentless fever, rapid deterioration

**For in-house safety and operations**

1. Define essential services to maintain plant and functionality.

**Summary of action steps**
Sick persons stay home.
Sick persons do not travel.
*Family members of a sick person may work* but monitor symptoms and notify supervisors, and stay home at the first sign of sickness.
Sick persons must be sent home. They should be immediately separated from others, and sent home. While awaiting separation, they should be given a mask if it is impossible to keep them from others.
Fellow workers should be informed of possible contact. But confidentiality as to who the contact might be is required by law.
Cover coughs and sneezes. Cover them with tissue or in its absence, one’s sleeve. Flush or use non-touch receptacles.
Clean surfaces. Use cleaning agents as per their instructions. No additional disinfectant is recommended.
Take routine seasonal flu infections. Note: H1N1 vaccine is not yet available, but will be ordered once it is available.
Traveling staff: Do not commence travel if ill. Obtain prompt medical attention if you get sick while abroad.
High-risk individuals (those with decreased pulmonary function and pregnant females): Pay close attention to the news. Avoid close contact with large numbers of people. Be prepared to stay home. Follow advice above very carefully.

**In the event of an epidemic**

The goals are to:

1. Reduce the spread and severity of disease and
2. Maintain productivity.

We will issue regular updates and advice. Check this website daily.

Get this document in PDF format. Click Here.
Travax H1N1 Flu Updates
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Additional links on this topic:

Vaccine Refusal