

October 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The new school year is already underway and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit has been working closely with schools and school boards in preparation for a busy and unusual influenza season. We have been collaborating on strategies related to the surveillance, prevention and management of H1N1 influenza (also known as the swine flu).

Although the summer months saw a decline in the number of cases of H1N1 reported, we continued to get reports of sporadic cases in July and August, which is unusual. To date, cases have been relatively mild. With autumn fast approaching, along with influenza season, we hope the disease will remain mild but do not know for certain if its severity will change.

The Eastern Ontario Health Unit has met with all of the school boards to review infection prevention and control practices, reporting absenteeism rates of greater than 10% and outbreak management. As in the past, we continue to work with schools to prevent and control the spread of influenza in the school setting.

As parents and guardians, **you play an important role in limiting the transmission of disease within the school setting.** To help ensure your child's return to school is a safe and healthy one, we ask you to follow these recommendations:

- Teach your child how to help prevent the spread of disease:
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, and hands aren't visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used. Hand sanitizers should contain 60-90% alcohol to be effective.
 - Cough and sneeze into the sleeve, not into hands.
 - Don't share objects that go in the mouth, such as cups, drinking boxes, water bottles, utensils, musical instruments with mouthpieces, mouth guards, cigarettes and even lip balms.
- Keep your child home from school if he or she isn't well. Your child may have influenza (H1N1) if they have a fever and cough, the two most common symptoms. Other symptoms include:
 - sore throat
 - loss of appetite
 - headache
 - muscle aches
 - fatigue
 - nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (especially in young children)
- Ensure you are prepared to pick your child up if he/she becomes ill while at school. Have an alternate person that can pick your child up if you cannot. Make sure the school has current contact information for you and your alternate.

www.eohu.ca · Your health...our priority | www.bseo.ca

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 ☒ 1000 rue Pitt St.,
 Cornwall, ON K6J 5T1
 ☎ 613-933-1375
 1 800 267-7120
 ☎ 613-933-7930

ALEXANDRIA
 ☒ 60 rue Anik St.,
 Unit/unité #2,
 Alexandria, ON K0C 1A0
 ☎ 613-525-1112
 ☎ 613-525-2603

CASSELMAN
 ☒ 787 rue Principale St.,
 P.O. Box/C.P. 338,
 Casselman, ON K0A 1M0
 ☎ 613-764-2841
 1 800 267-8260
 ☎ 613-764-0264

HAWKESBURY
 ☒ 134 rue Main St. E
 Suite/bureau 301,
 Hawkesbury, ON K6A 1A3
 ☎ 613-632-4355
 1 800 565-2314
 ☎ 613-632-4171

ROCKLAND
 ☒ 2229 rue Laurier St.,
 Suite/bureau 200,
 2nd floor/à l'étage,
 Rockland, ON K4K 0B7
 ☎ 613-446-1400
 ☎ 613-446-1454

WINCHESTER
 ☒ 457 rue Main St. E,
 P.O. Box/C.P. 616,
 Winchester, ON K0C 2K0
 ☎ 613-774-2739
 ☎ 613-774-4079

- Inform the school if your child is ill, and provide them with information on your child's symptoms.

Your child can return to school when there is no longer a fever and he/she is feeling well. After an infection, it is possible for a cough to persist for days, or even longer. It isn't necessary to keep your child at home if he/she has a cough but no other symptoms.

For ongoing up-to-date information on H1N1, visit the Eastern Ontario Health Unit's website at www.eohu.ca. If you have questions regarding H1N1, call 613-933-1375 or 1 800 267-7120, and ask for the Health Line. If your child has the symptoms described above and you're unsure whether he/she needs to see a healthcare professional, call Telehealth Ontario at 1 866 797-0000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Roumeliotis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, MD, CM, MPH, FRCP(C)
Medical Officer of Health