
FACTSHEET

August 31, 2009

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
Ministry of Health Services

H1N1 INFO FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

Adults and children with chronic health conditions are one group of the population that is at higher risk of contracting and suffering complications from the H1N1 flu virus. These chronic health conditions are the same that make people eligible for the seasonal flu vaccine (diabetes, chronic heart or lung conditions, asthma, etc.). Besides common sense precautions such as staying home if you're sick or coughing into your sleeve, there are a number of other steps you can take to best protect yourself.

Before you get the flu:

- During one of your regular doctor visits prior to the fall, talk with your doctor about whether you should get a prescription for antivirals in advance. As antivirals work best when taken within 24 hours of showing flu symptoms, in the event you get sick in the fall, you can just call your doctor to get this prescription filled.
- You may also wish to find a "flu buddy" to assist you in accessing medication in the event you become ill and unable to travel.
- Talk to your doctor about having a two-week supply of medication on hand.
- Be alert to changes in your breathing, especially if you have heart failure, congestive heart disease or COPD.
- Inform family members or close friends of your medical condition.

If you get the flu:

- Treat any fever right away with fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol.
- Call your doctor to get your prescription for antiviral medication filled.
- Seek medical attention if your symptoms worsen or if you experience chest pain or shortness of breath.
- If you use medications for your condition, continue taking it even if you become sick with the flu, unless your doctor or health care provider says otherwise.
- If you do have to travel outside the home while you have flu symptoms, wearing a simple surgical mask will help protect **others** from your coughing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.

You can call [HealthLink BC](#) at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day/seven days a week to speak to a nurse if you have more questions or are concerned about any illness/symptoms experienced by you or your children.

For the latest facts on the H1N1 flu virus, including back-to-school information, visit www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1.

