



For immediate release: July 6, 2009

Influenza Update

The Northwestern Health Unit continues to see the H1N1 influenza A virus reported in the region. To date, 59 cases have been identified in the Health Unit catchment area.

While the H1N1 outbreak continues to be labeled a global 'pandemic', Dr. Jim Arthurs, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit reports that this is a reflection of the spread of the disease, and not the severity of the illness it causes. He states "symptoms are similar to seasonal influenza, and include headache, chills and cough followed by fever, loss of appetite, muscle aches and fatigue, runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes and throat irritation."

Dr. Arthurs continues "we know that H1N1 is present in our region, and if you have the symptoms described above it is possible that you have H1N1". As with any seasonal flu, some people will be infected and feel only mildly ill, while others will be more seriously ill or have complications like pneumonia.

H1N1 is found in saliva and mucous from the nose and mouth. The virus can be spread from our body to others when we talk, laugh, cough, or sneeze. The following tips can help you avoid contact with the virus:

- Keep a 1-2 metre distance from anyone with whom you are face-to-face
- Wash your hands often, and before touching your face
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve to avoid contaminating your hands
- And if you do become ill, stay home and limit close contact with others.

Contact your health care provider or call TeleHealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 if you have flu-like symptoms.

Additional information can be found at www.nwhu.on.ca.

-30-

Dr. James Arthurs
Medical Officer of Health (A)
Northwestern Health Unit
jarthurs@nwhu.on.ca
1-800-830-5978 ext. 252