



## H1N1

CDHBC encourages its registrants to continue to assess patients on a case-by-case basis and to ensure that universal infection control protocols are followed in an effort to manage the spread of H1N1 virus (swine flu). According to the evidence available, H1N1 has incubation period of approximately seven days, and similar to other human influenzas, infected individuals may remain contagious for up to seven days.

The virus is spread via aerosols produced by coughing and sneezing, and through direct contact with infected individuals or contaminated surfaces. Those at risk of severe infection include those with complicating medical factors and/or immunocompromising conditions, pregnant women and young children.

Symptoms of this virus include acute onset of respiratory illness with cough, with or without fever; gastrointestinal symptoms may also present. If there is shortness of breath or pain breathing, it is recommended to see a doctor immediately.

As primary oral health care providers, dental hygienists have a professional responsibility to continue to provide patient care in the face of infectious disease outbreaks. Maintaining optimal infection control standards will prevent transmission between patients and health care providers while ensuring that oral care needs are met. Despite careful prevention in the clinical setting, it is still possible to contract the H1N1 virus through a variety of daily activities outside of the dental office. Dental hygienists who present with the symptoms outlined above are encouraged to stay at home in order to further decrease transmission among the public.

Further information regarding vaccinations, anti-virals and H1N1 preparedness can be found at the following sites:

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/index-eng.php)

[www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/)

If you become symptomatic or have questions regarding H1N1, please contact the H1N1 Flu Hotline at (800) 454-8302 or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours/7days per week to speak directly with a nurse. For current, daily-updated information on this situation, please visit the Centre for Disease Control website: [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca) . Also see the Fall 2009 Issue of Access for more information.