

## FACTSHEET

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport  
Ministry of Health Services  
Ministry of Education

### TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT THE H1N1 FLU VIRUS

News reports can sometimes scare children because they often focus on worst-case situations. You can help ease your family's fears by providing them with accurate information. Here are a few tips for talking to your kids about the H1N1 flu virus:

- Initiate the conversation. Left to their own devices, children can come up with stories that are often more frightening than the reality.
- Ask them what they have heard. You can help to reassure them with facts.
- Keep explanations very simple for younger children.
- Assure your children there is no need to panic. The public health service and health care providers are working hard to limit the spread of the disease and help people who may become ill.
- You can tell your kids that public health officials have been clear that, presently, this H1N1 flu virus looks more and more like a seasonal flu.
- Let them know that even the most serious pandemic happened almost 100 years ago and, even then, 97 per cent of people who were ill survived. That was before people had access to the medical knowledge, care and medications that we have today.
- The majority of the cases in North America have been mild so far.
- Remind your kids of ways to avoid getting sick:
  - Wash your hands frequently, especially before eating;
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
  - Don't share the same cup or share utensils with other people;
  - Sneeze into a tissue instead of your hands and then throw the tissue away; and
  - Tell your parents if you don't feel well, and stay home from school if you are sick.
- Be a role model! Adults should make sure they wash their hands properly and sneeze into a tissue or their elbow to set a good example for kids.

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

