

Prepare Yourself For

H1N1

Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR NURSES



Prepare Yourself for H1N1

Your union is urging you to take **precautions** against the possibility of contracting H1N1 influenza in the workplace by any route of exposure.

There is strong evidence to suggest that airborne (inhalation) transmission is one of the potential routes of transmission.

See www.nursesunions.ca for the evidence.



Your safety is not negotiable

Remember that under your provincial occupational health and safety legislation, in some circumstances, you have the right to refuse unsafe work.

Consult your provincial statute to determine the extent and limits of your right. Work with your union representative on the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee to ensure that any concerns are addressed.



The point is not who is right and who is wrong about airborne transmission. The point is not science, but safety. Scientific knowledge changes constantly...

We should be driven by the precautionary principle that reasonable steps to reduce risk should not await scientific certainty...

Until this precautionary principle is fully recognized, mandated and enforced... workers will continue to be at risk.

Justice Archie Campbell,
Chair,
SARS Commission Final Report

Before working in proximity to a patient with H1N1, suspected H1N1, or influenza-like illness (ILI) ensure that:

- ✓ Access points are limited, there is prominent infection control signage and active screening is conducted at each access point.
- ✓ Engineering, administrative and environmental controls are in place (e.g. Plexiglas at triage, bed spacing, adequate breaks that ease the stress of working with extra equipment).

- ✓ You know where to go for information or to have issues resolved in a timely fashion.
- ✓ A risk assessment has been done to determine if you are at risk of exposure to H1N1.

If you are at risk of exposure, make sure that:

- ✓ You have been fitted with an appropriate respirator (at least N95).

- ✓ You have received in-service training on why, when and how to use the respirator.
- ✓ You know where you can immediately access the respirator and other equipment (e.g. gowns, appropriate gloves, eye/face protection), if you need it. Remember that personal glasses are not adequate eye protection!

- ✓ Put on an appropriate respirator (at least a fitted N95) as you have been trained.
- ✓ Put on eye protection, gown and gloves.

If you are at risk of complications from H1N1 or cannot wear an N95 due to health personal conditions:

- ✓ Start discussions with your union and employer now about accommodation needs.

Between patients or after leaving areas of exposure:

- ✓ Discard N95 and other disposable PPE after any possibility of contamination. If your N95 is damaged or if breathing becomes difficult, replace it with a new one. Take off equipment as instructed during training.
- ✓ Dispose of viral-contaminated waste as clinical waste.

- ✓ Ensure cleaning and disinfection of personal/dedicated patient equipment and contaminated areas.

