



NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

108 LAKESHORE DRIVE
NORTH BAY, ONTARIO P1A 2A8
PHONE: (705) 474-8851 • FAX: (705) 474-6019
www.noha.on.ca



Date: October 29, 2009

To: All NOHA Associations, Teams and On-Ice Officials

From: Bryce Kulik

Re: H1N1 - Fair Play Initiative - Sportsmanship

At the present time, our society is very concerned about the various sicknesses before us and we all may be wondering what we can do about the Flu, Colds and H1N1. In an effort to help educate our members, the NOHA has put together the following information. Please ensure this document is widely distributed to your members.

SUBJECT: H1N1 Virus – Recommended Steps for all Associations and Teams

Ladies and Gentlemen:

There is presently much speculation as to the impact that the H1N1 virus will have on Canadians over the next few months. Organizations have been urged to stress to their members steps that should be taken to prevent the spread of the virus, and to have plans in place to alleviate any hardships that may come of the spread of H1N1.

Hockey Canada has for many years had specific steps in place to reduce the spread of any infection in the hockey environment and we urge you to remind your teams of the following.

Team staff need to emphasize to players and parents the need for total cooperation in all aspects concerning hygiene, but specifically to the prevention of the transmission of the H1N1 virus. The following are recommended steps within the team environment:

1. Players should be urged to report all illnesses to their parents and the Safety Person/Trainer. **Parents are urged to keep their children away from the hockey environment if they are showing any signs of infectious disease or virus. Sick players are encouraged to see their physician if showing signs or symptoms of the H1N1 virus, and to be fully recovered prior to returning to play.**
2. Players should be encouraged to wash hands routinely and always after handling hockey equipment. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is one of the best preventions we can recommend. Teams are encouraged to carry extra hand soap or hand sanitizer as not all arenas have this readily available.



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3. Talk to your players about covering their mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing using their arm as opposed to their hands.
4. Advise players to try and not touch their own mouths or nose when in the hockey environment to reduce the chance of them passing an infection on to themselves.
5. Ensure all players and staff has **their own water bottles labelled with names and players numbers.** Sport drink bottles should be avoided as direct lip contact is possible when drinking.
6. Officials and coaches should avoid drinking from other players water bottles and have water readily available to them on their perspective benches.
7. Towels should be removed from all benches. Players should not share towels, clothing, bar soap or other personal items such as razors.
8. Assist athletes in protecting their immune system by stressing they get sufficient sleep, that they do not over train and that they get proper nutrition.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Aubry
Chief Medical Officer, Hockey Canada

Fair Play Initiative

Current Practice- Prior to each game the on-ice officials approach each bench and shake hands with the Team Officials from each team.

This procedure has caused some concern as it relates to the H1N1 and other flu viruses specifically as it relates to the potential for this procedure to put Team Officials, Players and Officials at an unnecessary risk of exposure to the virus.

Given this concern the NOHA is implementing a new procedure for the balance of the 2009-10 season effective immediately.

The **new** procedure involves the on-ice officials approaching each bench prior to the game. The on-ice officials will greet the Team Officials and wish them good luck without a handshake.



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We believe this procedure will significantly reduce the potential for exposure for all involved but still demonstrates the sportsmanlike gesture intended by the handshaking procedure.

PLAYERS SHAKING HANDS BEFORE OF AFTER THE GAME

Hockey Canada would like to emphasize that the information distributed in the bulletin above related to the H1N1 virus has not changed with respect to recommendations around its prevention.

That being said, we have had numerous enquiries with respect to handshaking following hockey games and the spread of the H1N1 virus. Hockey Canada has posed this question to our Chief Medical Officer, and we feel that preventative steps such as hand washing are as important.

Although the spread of germs can be done in many forms, and simply keeping hockey gloves on or not shaking hands doesn't in itself eliminate the spread, it is entirely up to your Branch or Associations as to what you dictate around post-game hand shakes.

The NOHA recommends that the players keep their gloves on and tap the other players' gloves. We also recommend that the Coaches do not touch any player's gloves or the opposing Coaches hands but wish them a good game.

Keep in mind we still stress that promoting the preventative guidelines distributed is the most important.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

In response to the recent reports regarding the possibility of a re-emergence of the H1N1 influenza virus over the next several months, the attached information has been compiled from the Ontario Ministry of Health and is intended for the purpose of providing awareness, education and general guidelines in the prevention and recognition of the H1N1 flu.

From a safety and risk management perspective, the close interaction of athletes in a team sport environment is a potential concern for the transmission of this virus and in order to take precautionary measures, we encourage all member associations to make this information readily available to team trainers.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/>



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H1N1 FLU VIRUS and PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

SPORT4ONTARIO has received numerous requests for information on the H1N1 flu virus and pandemic preparedness. We trust you will find the following resources of value.

SPORT H1N1 Resources

2009 Canada Games - Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of H1N1 Flu Virus at the 2009 Canada Games
Hockey Canada - Oct. 27/09 information bulletin from Dr. Marc Aubry, Chief Medical officer, Hockey Canada
SIRC - H1N1 policies and resources
Sport BC - H1N1 Information for Sports Organizations prepared by the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
Sport PEI - Sport Advisory on the H1N1 Virus

OTHER H1N1 and PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

Government

Ontario Ministry of Education - H1N1 Virus
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - H1N1 Virus
Guidelines for Summer Camps
Guidelines for Elementary and Secondary Schools
Guidelines for Universities and Colleges
Public Health Agency of Canada - fightflu.ca

Other

Canadian Accountants of Canada - Pandemic Preparation and Response - Questions for Directors to Ask:
October 2009 Not-for-profit Organizations Director Alert
Imagine Canada - many valuable resources
National Council of Nonprofits (US site) - H1N1 Flu Preparedness for Nonprofits
Ontario Trillium Foundation - Pandemic Resources and Information

For more **H1N1 Flu Virus and Pandemic Preparedness** resources visit:

<http://www.sport4ontario.ca/Content/RiskManagement/H1N1andPandemicPreparedness.asp>



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HEALTH CANADA INFORMATION

You may find additional information on the Health Canada website at
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

GAME CANCELLATIONS

Please use common sense.

If a team is sick with the flu then the game should be rescheduled. This does not mean that the number 1 centre is out, there is a difference. It is important that Team Managers communicate with each other. It is very important for the governing people to communicate with League Convenors, Teams and League Presidents. Listen to the direction of your local Health Units.

Affiliate players - Teams must try their best to utilize affiliate players to fill in where registered players are ill.

The NOHA would appreciate it if you could inform your NOHA Council Director of any games cancelled and/or rescheduled as a result of Flu like symptoms.

RETURNING TO PLAY AFTER FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS

Question:

I have been following your guidelines on reducing/managing risk during the current H1N1 environment, thank you for the guidance. We currently have 8 players out with flu like symptoms, 3 on the weekend and 5 more now. Could you comment on our teams position that all players that have or had flu like symptoms / illness must see a Doctor before returning to the team.

Answer:

Ideally they should see a physician to make sure they do not contaminate others.
(Dr. Mark Aubrey, Chief Medical Officer-Hockey Canada)



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CLOSING REMARKS

As to controlling the spread of any virus, follow the advice from the health care community. Self quarantine at the earliest symptoms, wash hands, don't share water bottles or towels, do what you can to limit exposure. **Please educate yourself !**

I appreciate your anticipated cooperation in communicating this to your membership.

Yours truly,

Bryce Kulik
NOHA President