

# H1N1

## Considerations for Work Places

September 30th, 2009

Dee Mombourquette, RN

Communicable Disease Coordinator

Dept of Health Promotion & Protection

Suzanne Rhodenizer-Rose, RN

Infection Control Consultant

Dept of Health

Updated Sept. 29th 2009



# Outline

- Epidemiology
- Public Health strategy
- Prevention measures
- Caring for the ill
- Maintaining operations

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



## Source of Information

- Based on Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Interim Guidance Documents
- Guidance may change if situation changes. Check HPP website.
- Link with public health in your area for answers to specific questions.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

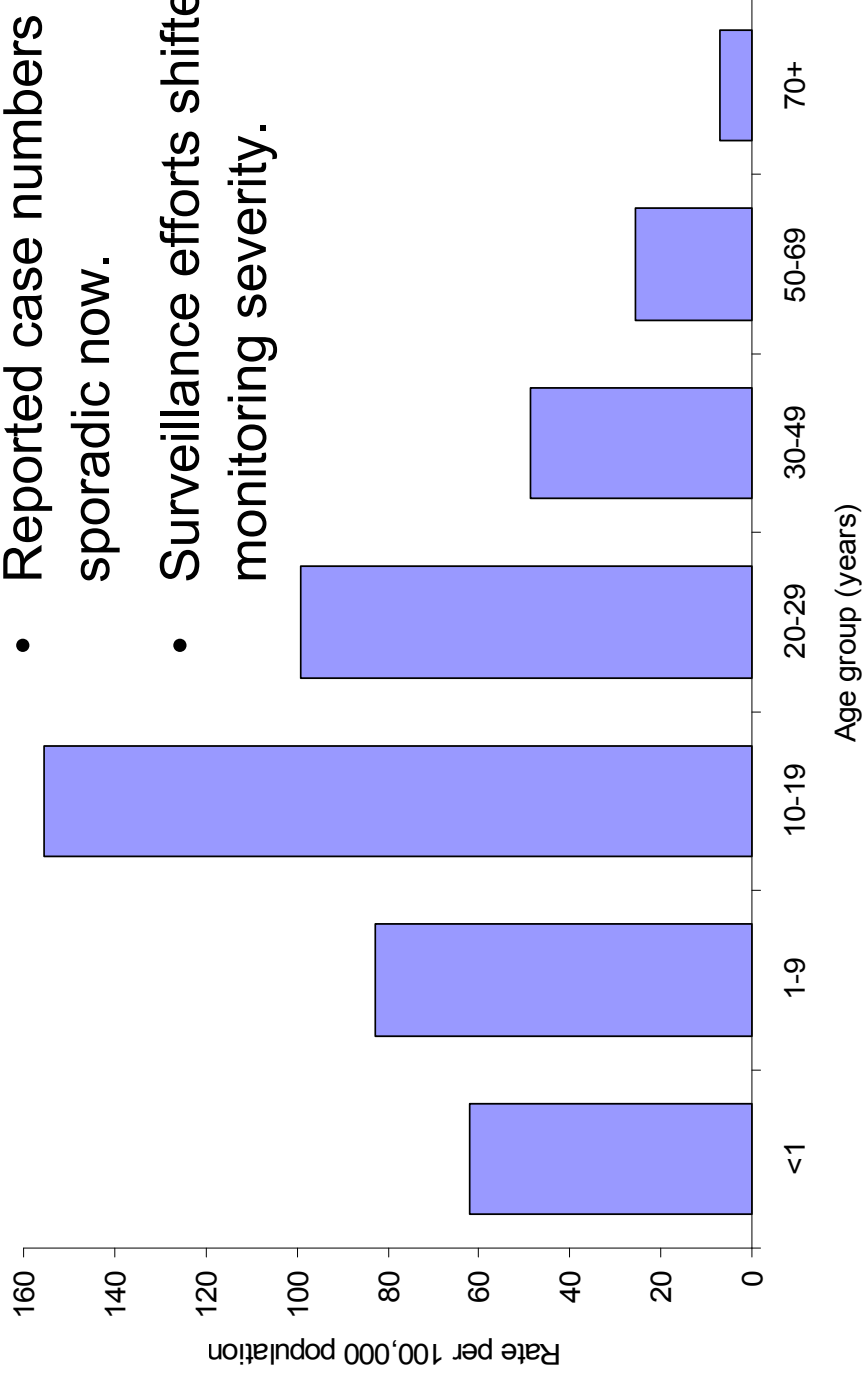
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Lab Confirmed H1N1 in NS

- Was widespread in the community.
- Younger age groups most affected.
- Reported case numbers only sporadic now.
- Surveillance efforts shifted to monitoring severity.



Rates as of Aug. 1, 2009

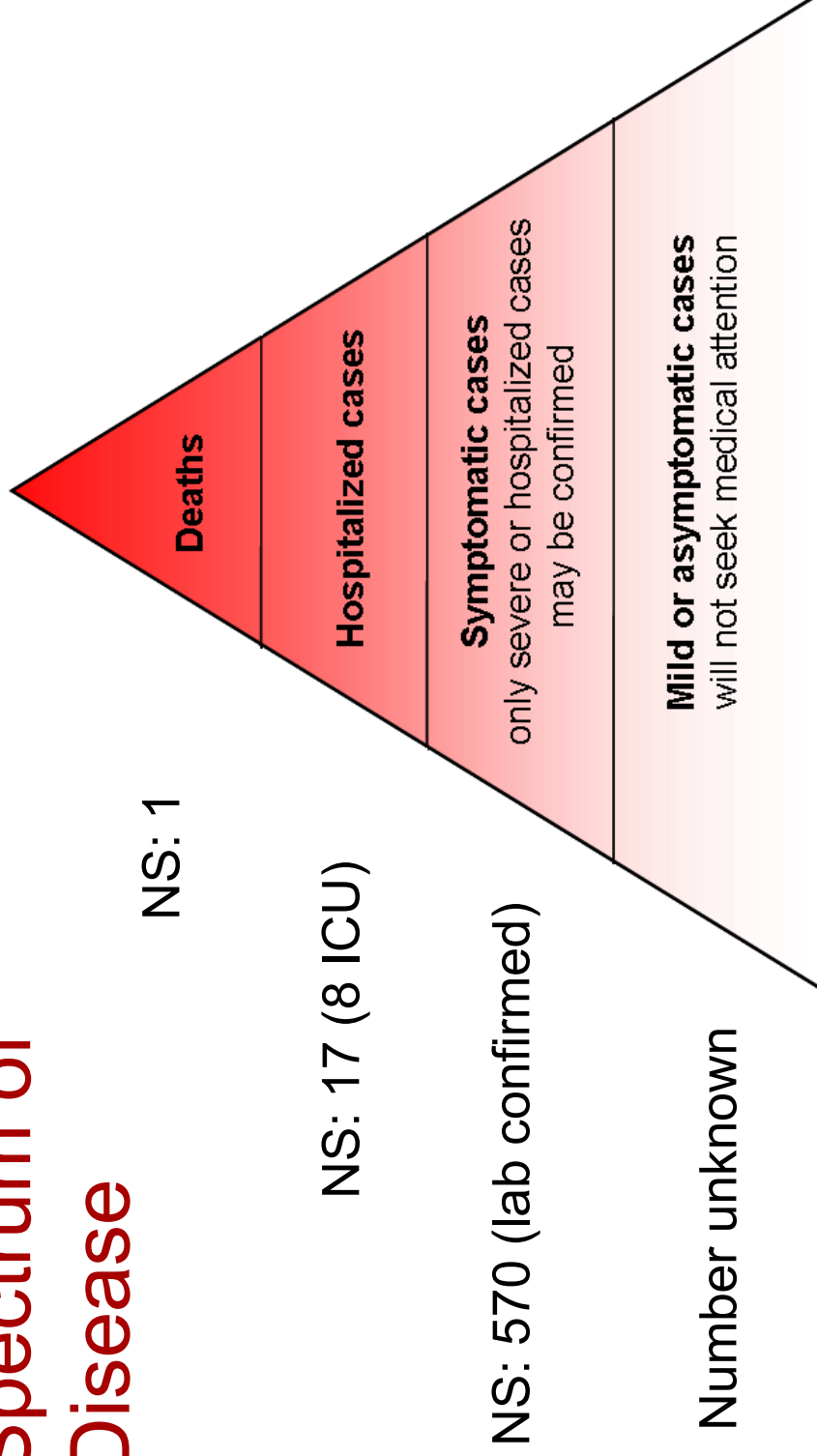
# H1N1

**NOVA SCOTIA**  
Health  
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION. WASH UP.



# H1N1:Wide Spectrum of Disease



As of Aug. 15, 2009

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION. WASH UP.



# Predictions for 09/10

- Many unknowns:
  - Timing of the second wave
  - Virulence/severity
- 20 to 30% of workplace may be ill over a 2 to 3 month period.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Public Health Strategy

- **Prevent infection**
  - hand hygiene and cough etiquette
  - self-isolation
  - immunization
- **Caring for the ill**
  - early identification
  - treatment
- **Maintain operations**

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Disseminate Prevention Information

- Hand hygiene
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Environmental cleaning
- How to recognize influenza
- Self-isolation
- Immunization

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Virus

- Virus spreads person to person
- Directly: coughing and sneezing
- Indirectly:
  - Virus survives for several hours to days on some surfaces. Destroyed by cleaning
  - Self-inoculation after contact with surfaces and objects contaminated with virus

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Hand Hygiene

- Ensure hand washing supplies (soap and paper towels) are always available.
- Consider providing increased numbers of:
  - hand wash and alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations;
  - tissues and waste receptacles.
- Hand hygiene educational programs available – link with local public health.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



## Cough and Sneeze Etiquette

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve.
- If using tissues, dispose of them into appropriate receptacle and wash hands.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Environmental Cleaning

- High-touch surfaces should be cleaned thoroughly at least daily.
- Think about: doorknobs, faucet handles, sports equipment, computer keyboards, telephones, handrails, etc.
- Use regular household or commercially available cleaning products.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Environmental Cleaning

Consider:

- Educating cleaning personnel on proper cleaning techniques.
- Providing disinfectant wipes.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# How to Recognize Influenza

- Flu-like symptoms are:
  - fever and/or cough and;
  - one or more of: unusual tiredness, head, muscle or joint aches, or sore throat.
- Mostly a mild, self-limiting illness but can be severe
- Risk groups: immuno-compromised, pregnancy, underlying medical conditions

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Self-Isolation

- Individuals influenza-like illness (ILI) should stay home until they are:
  - feeling well; and,
  - able to fully participate in all normal day-to-day activities.

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Self-Isolation

- Assess the risk for special settings where there may be more individuals at risk
- Discuss with Public Health

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



## III Person at Work

- Separate from others with adequate supervision until they can go home
- Environmental cleaning
- Send home in car/taxi rather than on the bus.
- If person must ride the bus
  - Sit on seat alone
  - Cover coughs and sneezes

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



## III Person at Work

- Remind co-workers of prevention messages
- Not necessary to inform co-workers
- No need for quarantine

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# H1N1 & Pregnancy

- No need for well pregnant women to stay home from work
- If pregnant women develop ILLI they should seek urgent care, esp. if in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> trimester or first 4 weeks after delivery

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Immunization

- Seasonal influenza vaccine
  - Many questions in light of pandemic strain
  - Does not protect against H1N1.
- H1N1 vaccine – many unknowns
  - Timing – likely to start November 2009.
  - Priority groups but will be available to all who want and need it.
  - Looking at multiple provider options

# H1N1

 **NOVA SCOTIA**  
Health  
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Maintain Operations

- 20 to 30% of workforce may be ill over several months.
- Remember Business Continuity Planning.

# H1N1

 NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Masks

- The use of masks in the work setting or for the general public is not recommended because of the following:
  - Incorrect use.
  - Self-contamination issues.
  - Not an effective barrier when they are worn for extended periods of time.
  - False sense of security.

# H1N1

 **NOVA SCOTIA**  
Health  
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Masks

- If employees in close contact with public consider
  - if possible, keep 2m distance
  - physical barrier at reception
  - limit sharing of equipment

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

WASH UP.



# Masks

- Consider use of surgical mask by ill people when in very close contact with others

# H1N1

NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Community Events

- Proactive closures NOT recommended at this time.
- Reactive closures: evaluate on a case by case basis. Consider:
  - Local public health concerns
  - Work place and community concerns
  - Operational concerns
  - Significant social and economic cost.
  - Limited effectiveness as people likely to congregate elsewhere.

# H1N1

 **NOVA SCOTIA**  
Health  
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Caring for the ill

- Not all of those who have influenza-like illness require medical care.
- Those who are moderately ill with risk factors, severely ill or pregnant, should seek care.
- Avoid clinic visits only for sick notes.

# H1N1

 NOVA SCOTIA  
Health

Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.



# Key Messages

- Base actions on a “common-sense, reasonable” approach
- What is “common-sense & reasonable” may change as pandemic evolves



Thank You

**H1N1**

 **NOVA SCOTIA**  
Health  
Health Promotion  
and Protection

DIRTY HANDS SPREAD INFECTION.

