

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### H1N1 FLU WORRIES CROWDING VIHA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

AUTHORITY WIDE – The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) emergency departments are experiencing high volumes of patient visits with mild to moderate flu symptoms and people are being reminded to use the ER wisely.

Many patients who are presenting with flu-like symptoms are well enough to be cared for at home and don't need to visit the ER. By visiting emergency departments with mild symptoms, people are actually exposing others to the flu virus. Symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to the common flu and may include fever, cough, headache, general aches and fatigue. Some people have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Supportive care at home - resting, drinking plenty of fluids and using a pain reliever for aches - is adequate for recovery in most cases.

People experiencing shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or with a fever lasting more than three days should seek medical care. For parents of a young child who is ill, seek medical care if the child has fast or labored breathing, continuing fever or convulsions (seizures). Call your family physician, or call HealthLink BC at 811 for 24/hr a day advice.

A person with the flu is contagious for 24-hours before they become sick, and for up to seven days after they become sick. The peak infectious period occurs in the first 3-4 days after a person shows symptoms. Children may be contagious for longer than a week. It is also recommended to stay away from work or school for at least seven days from the start of your symptoms. Limit your contact with other people so you don't spread the infection.

A comprehensive booklet on H1N1 preparedness titled **Be Prepared Be Well** is available online and includes valuable information, such as protecting yourself and your family against the virus, symptoms to look for and self-care. Visit: [www.viha.ca/h1n1/](http://www.viha.ca/h1n1/)

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Visit HealthLink BC 24/7 if you have questions or concerns:  
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