



Health and Social Services
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Yukon Medical Officer of Health
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November 3, 2009

Dear parents,

As expected, the H1N1 virus is circulating in Yukon schools. As most of you know by now, one school-aged child lost her life due to complications from the virus.

Understandably, this information can raise the level of anxiety in the population, especially among parents, but it is important to remember that the H1N1 virus is, for the most part, a mild flu. The child who died had significant underlying chronic conditions that contributed to her death. For every child with severe disease, there are at least several hundred if not thousands who get the flu and recover normally.

However, it is very important for healthy children and adults to get vaccinated against both the H1N1 and seasonal influenza's, so they can remain healthy and avoid spreading the influenza. Children and young adults have a remarkable ability to carry around, and share, a host of viruses, including influenza.

If you or your child have mild influenza, please stay at home and treat it in the normal way: rest, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen, and drink fluids. If your symptoms are getting worse, such as with fever over three days, or difficulty breathing, then we would like you to be seen in the flu assessment clinic in Whitehorse (Taiga Clinic, 210 Elliot Street), at your doctor's office or community health centre, or in Emergency. If you are not sure what to do, call 811.

Your children can still go to daycare and school unless they are ill with influenza-like illness or for some other illness. Children with common colds do not have to be kept out of schools or daycares. There are no plans to close schools or daycares.

Quarantine measures are not being used as part of the response to flu, as influenza is widespread in the community and is now likely present in all Yukon communities.

For further questions or concerns, please check the YG website at <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/> or www.fightflu.ca.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Hanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Brendan E. Hanley MD CCFP(EM) MPH
Yukon Medical Officer of Health