



**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Chief Medical Officer of Health

Médecin hygiéniste en chef

**This is a Different Kind of Flu Season
*Protect Your Family from the Flu***

February, 2010

Dear Parents:

As we are experiencing a busier than usual flu season this year, there is some important information that I would like to share with you – not only as Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, but also as a parent.

What makes this flu season different? H1N1 has affected children and young adults at a greater rate than the regular seasonal flu. Almost half of the people hospitalized from H1N1 have been under the age of 24. And even a mild case of H1N1 can have a significant impact. With flu season expected to continue throughout the winter, it's important to safeguard your health and the health of those around you. Here are some steps you can take to keep your family healthy.

The best defense against both the H1N1 and seasonal flu is to get immunized. You can be confident that both vaccines were authorized for use by Health Canada only after undergoing rigorous testing and review to ensure their safety and efficacy.

The H1N1 vaccine contains the pandemic flu strain that is currently circulating in Ontario. We're also offering the seasonal flu vaccine as a precaution against seasonal flu strains that may begin to circulate in the province later in the flu season. I strongly encourage you and your family to get your flu shots. Free H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines are being offered to all Ontarians in many difference places - doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces and public health units.

If you have any flu-like symptoms, stay home and use the self-assessment tool on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website which provides advice on whether or not you should see a health care provider. For more information on H1N1 and seasonal flu, visit www.ontario.ca/flu.

Sincerely,

Arlene King, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health