

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Information

It is important that as Exercise & Health Fitness Professionals we are aware of the signs and symptoms of the Pandemic (H1N1) "Swine Flu".

What is it?

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 is a new flu virus which has been circulating worldwide since April, and we have seen over 144 cases in Ireland so far.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared this to be a pandemic – a flu epidemic that spreads around the world.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are like those of normal seasonal flu and include: fever that begins very suddenly, severe fatigue, a cough, a sore throat, a runny nose, headache and muscle aches. Some people have vomiting and diarrhoea. While it is usually a mild disease some people may develop complications such as pneumonia.

You will need medical care if you have noticed the following:

Adult Symptoms

If you have taken the basic care steps outlined above and you start to feel worse, or if after a few days you are not feeling better, you may need more advice from your doctor.

- Shortness of breath at rest or while doing very little
- Painful or difficult breathing
- Coughing up bloody sputum
- Drowsiness, disorientation or confusion
- Fever for 4-5 days and not starting to get better (or getting worse)
- Starting to feel better then developing high fever and feeling unwell again.

Child Symptoms

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin colour
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash.

Tips for prevention

- Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell and have fever and cough
- Always carry tissues.
- Always cover your nose and mouth with clean tissues, when coughing or sneezing. If you have no tissues immediately available, cough or sneeze into your arm or sleeve (not into your hand) is recommended.
- Dispose of used tissues in the bin immediately.

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol based hand cleaners regularly.
- Clean surfaces regularly with bleach based household cleaners to get rid of germs.
- Boost your immune system by maintaining a balanced and healthy diet.
 - Include physical activity into your daily routine - it will boost your immune system and helps keep you in optimal health.



Advice for managers & instructors working in a gym

Clean off the equipment:

"The treadmill panel, elliptical handles, strength machine grips, dumbbells, mats, there's no shortage of surfaces that someone could have unintentionally infected by sneezing or coughing on it. Prevent picking up those germs by wiping off and squirting any area you'll touch with one of the disinfectant sprays the gym should have handy on the floor."

Wash hands before, and after, your workout:

"Viruses like H1N1 are introduced into your body when you rub your eyes, nose or mouth, so keep hands as clean as possible to cut your risk of infection. Scrubbing with liquid soap is best--and temperature doesn't matter, but time does: rub hands under running water for at least 20 seconds.

To be extra-safe, make a bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitizer available in the gym along with your water and encourage it to be used liberally."

Don't skip the shower: "For many infectious diseases, the one hygienic factor that seems most protective is showering and microbes that get on your skin, in many different ways, can get washed off by showers."

Keep your distance in class: "People can be infectious a day or so before showing symptoms, so it can be difficult to tell if they are ill. To keep contamination free, remain far enough away from fellow dancers or bootcampers so that droplets from a surprise sneeze or cough that they may let loose cannot hit you."

Personal actions

If you get sick with a flu-like illness phone the Flu Information Line on Freephone 1800 94 11 00, available 24 hrs a day. Most people with flu will be able to recover at home within a few days without needing anti-viral medicine or medical care. Also visit www.hse.ie to get more advice on home care.