



# FOCUS

on the influenza pandemic

A newsletter from the Ministère de la Santé  
et des Services sociaux du Québec

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## THERE IS NO INFLUENZA PANDEMIC IN QUÉBEC



YOUR NEWSLETTER HAS ITS  
**FOCUS** ON THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

***Focus on the influenza pandemic is the official newsletter dedicated to the population. Its main objective is to provide the most current information on the flu pandemic that Québec may be facing. In addition to offering a wealth of useful information, this newsletter will keep people informed on how the situation is evolving, the preparations in progress and the latest developments. Focus on the influenza pandemic will be an essential communications tool in a influenza pandemic situation.***

***For more information, please consult our Web site regularly at [www.pandemicquebec.ca](http://www.pandemicquebec.ca), the Government of Québec's official site on the flu pandemic.***

***Stay in the loop. Stay informed.***

***The Communications Team***



**FOCUS** ON THE NEWS

Last March, the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Philippe Couillard, unveiled the Québec Pandemic Influenza Plan—Health Mission. The plan, which is available on the Web site under the heading Québec, outlines a series of actions and strategies for dealing with a potential influenza pandemic. Among the actions is an initial campaign to promote the new Web site [www.pandemicquebec.ca](http://www.pandemicquebec.ca) across Québec as of mid-May 2006. Ads in weekly publications and banners on certain Web sites will encourage the public to visit the new site regularly for all the official information on the influenza pandemic.



**FOCUS** ON PREVENTION

Influenza, also known as the flu, is highly contagious. It spreads quickly and easily. Fortunately, there are some simple preventive measures that can help limit its transmission.

### **Handwashing**

Handwashing, a simple thing that everyone can do, is the best way to curb the spread of infection. Effective handwashing takes 15 to 20 seconds. To wash your hands thoroughly, rub your hands together vigorously after wetting them and applying some soap. It is important to wash

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all hand surfaces, including the area between your fingers as well as your fingertips. Then rinse your hands under running water and dry them with a clean towel or paper towel. Be sure to turn off the tap using the towel or paper towel. It's as simple as that!

Washing your hands is recommended:

- when they are dirty;
- after going to the toilet;
- after changing a baby's diaper;
- before preparing something to eat;
- before eating;
- before putting in or removing contact lenses;
- after handling garbage.

It is all the more important to wash your hands if you are ill, particularly:

- after sneezing and blowing your nose;
- after coughing;

If soap and water are not available, there are alcohol-based hand sanitizers that are just as effective. If you use this type of product, make sure that it has an alcohol concentration of at least 60%.

## Respiratory hygiene

When you sneeze or cough, droplets containing the influenza virus can be projected into the air up to a metre away. These particles can survive several hours on the objects in your environment such as door handles, the telephone and the surface of your desk, among others. This is why you should:

- cover your mouth, with a tissue, when you cough or sneeze.

Wash your hands after:

- coughing into the crease of your elbow or the inner part of your upper arm if you do not have a tissue. These areas do not come into contact with people or objects;

**Handwashing, a simple thing that everyone can do, is the best way to curb the spread of infection.**

- spit into a tissue;
- dispose of used tissues by putting them in a garbage bag and then in a trash can that is closed or out of children's reach. When the garbage bag is full, close it, releasing all the air, and dispose of it the next time there is garbage collection.

**Don't forget to wash your hands afterward!**

## What should you do if you have the flu?

Rest is essential. Getting plenty of liquids is also important, especially if you have a fever. Drink more water, juice and broth than usual. Drinking more liquids will help you fight the infection better.

Limiting your contact with others is also necessary to protect those around you. And of course, never share utensils, cups or other personal items. Use soap and water to clean surfaces that are touched frequently.



Effective handwashing takes 15 to 20 seconds.

The *Focus on the influenza pandemic* newsletter is one of the communication tools developed by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux for the influenza pandemic. This tool will make it possible to provide the population with information on a regular basis.