



GTHL Statement Regarding H1N1 Virus

TORONTO (October 27, 2009) - The Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL) reaffirmed today the precautions players, teams and parents should be taking to help prevent the spread of H1N1 virus.

On September 9, 2009, the GTHL issued recommended steps for Associations and Teams to prevent the spread of the virus as issued by Dr. Mark Aubry, Chief Medical Officer of Hockey Canada.

The GTHL re-issued those recommendations today.

The precautions include:

1. Players should be urged to report all illnesses to their parents and the Safety Person/Trainer. **Parents are urged to keep their children away from the hockey environment if they are showing any signs of infectious disease or virus. Sick players are encouraged to see their physician if showing signs or symptoms of the H1N1 virus, and to be fully recovered prior to returning to play.**
2. Players should be encouraged to wash hands routinely and always after handling hockey equipment. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is one of the best preventions we can recommend. Teams are encouraged to carry extra hand soap or hand sanitizer as not all arenas have this readily available.
3. Talk to your players about covering their mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing using their arm as opposed to their hands.
4. Advise players to try and not touch their own mouths or nose when in the hockey environment to reduce the chance of them passing an infection on to themselves.
5. Ensure all players and staff have **their own water bottles labelled with names and players numbers.** Sport drink bottles should be avoided as direct lip contact is possible when drinking.
6. Officials and coaches should avoid drinking from other players water bottles and have water readily available to them on their prospective benches.
7. Towels should be removed from all benches. Players should not share towels, clothing, bar soap or other personal items such as razors.
8. Assist athletes in protecting their immune system by stressing they get sufficient sleep, that they do not over train and that they get proper nutrition.

“The best reaction is not to over-react but to act responsibly” said GTHL President John Gardner.

The Greater Toronto Hockey League will continue to monitor any and all recommendations being issued by Public Health agencies and will adopt any appropriate recommendations they may make in the future.

The Greater Toronto Hockey League is the largest amateur hockey league in the world. There are approximately 40,000 children and youth registered in the GTHL annually.

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