

# H1N1 Fact Sheet

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## Tips for Managing Stress During a Pandemic – Long Term Care Facility Residents

A flu pandemic is a stressful event. During a pandemic, you and your caregivers may worry about your health and the health of other residents of the long term care facility in which you live. Worry, fear and anxiety are common and normal reactions in this kind of situation. When you go through a stressful event, it is normal to experience some of the following:

- Change in sleep patterns and appetite
- Forgetfulness
- Less interest in daily activities
- Increased irritability and impatience

### Good habits for maintaining your and your caregivers' mental health include:

- Maintaining contact with loved ones, especially when isolated – a phone call can be safer than a visit when there are concerns about flu-like symptoms
- Engaging in stress management techniques as necessary
  - Take time out in a quiet area
  - Practice slow, measured breathing
  - Attend exercise programs as one is able and as these are available in the facility
- Being as physically active as possible
- Getting plenty of sleep
- Drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious food

For health reasons, there may be a need to restrict outside visitors to the facility which may cause isolation; a phone call is safer than a visit in this circumstance. Be aware that some residents may need to be isolated due to a diagnosis of H1N1.

Anxiety is natural in such circumstances.

### Positive coping strategies:

You should identify positive coping strategies that have previously been useful for you during illness or adversity. These strategies may be helpful in the present situation. Refer to the H1N1 Fact Sheet on 'Strategies for Building Resilience' for more suggestions.

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**For help with mental health problems – speak to those responsible for your care.**