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## FACTSHEET

May 4, 2009

Ministry of Education

### TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT SWINE FLU

News reports can sometimes scare children because they often focus on worst-case situations. You can help ease your family's fears by providing them with accurate information. Here are a few tips for talking to your kids about Swine Flu:

- Initiate the conversation. Left to their own devices, children can come up with stories that are often more frightening than the reality.
- Ask them what they have heard. You can help to reassure them with facts.
- Keep explanations very simple for younger children.
- Assure your children there is no need to panic. The public health service and health care providers are working hard to limit the spread of the disease and help people who may become ill.
- Let them know that the last flu pandemic serious enough to affect millions of people happened almost 100 years ago — before people had access to the medical knowledge, care, and medications that we have today. All of the cases in Canada have been mild so far.
- Remind your kids of ways to avoid getting sick:
  - Wash your hands frequently, especially before eating;
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
  - Don't share the same cup or share utensils with other people;
  - Sneeze into a tissue instead of your hands and then throw the tissue away.
  - Tell your parents if you don't feel well, and stay home from school if you are sick.

You can call [HealthLink BC](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca) at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day/seven days a week to speak to a nurse if you have more questions or are concerned about any illness/symptoms experienced by you or your children.

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Visit the Province's website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca) for online information and services.