

## **Coping Tips for H1N1 Outbreak**

### ***GET THE FACTS:***

Avoid rumors. Get your information from credible sources such as the Protect DuPage Website: [www.protectdupage.org](http://www.protectdupage.org), which has links to the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and the Illinois Department of Public Health. There can be inaccurate information circulating. Verify the information you receive and educate yourself and your family.

### ***COMMON REACTIONS:***

An event such as a flu outbreak can be stressful and impact you physically, cognitively emotionally, spiritually and behaviorally. Common reactions can be feeling overwhelmed, anxious or irritable; having difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or focusing; feeling physically tired, having aches and pains, or stomach upset; and having trouble sleeping, eating or feeling jumpy. All these reactions are normal responses to an unusual event and will improve with time, rest and replenishment.

### ***ACTIONS TO TAKE:***

**Self-Care:** Get adequate rest, eat balanced meals, and stay connected to others through talking and spending time. Exercise, engage in relaxing activities, and stick to normal routines for yourself and your children as much as possible. Monitor your own stress, and set an example of calm for your family. Take breaks from focusing on the event and limit media exposure. Use your support system friends, family, co-workers, and spiritual supports. Work on keeping a positive attitude.

**Planning:** Make a plan for yourself and family how to handle possible school closings, alternate plans for childcare or changes in your daily routine. Teach children and self effective health habits to decrease the likelihood of getting sick or spreading illness (“Good Health Habits” on the [www.protectdupage.org](http://www.protectdupage.org) website). Focus on family and individual strengths remembering methods used to cope effectively with problems in the past, use these methods now.

### ***REMINDERS:***

Remember stress is a normal reaction to this event and can be eased by practicing self care. Talk to others about working effectively through this time. Reach out to help others if possible, share your time, share facts, listen to concerns, and give reassurance.

### ***SEEK ADDITIONAL HELP IF YOU OR YOUR FAMILY:***

Feel unable to cope, cannot take care of normal daily activities, have an increase in pre-existing psychiatric symptoms (Depression, Bipolar Disorder), feel disoriented or have an increase in negative coping such as using drugs or alcohol. For additional support call the DuPage County Access and Crisis Center’s 24 hour number 630-627-1700.