



The North Dakota Department of Health offers the following guidance for religious communities to help reduce the risk of influenza, including the new H1N1 influenza virus.

- Parishes should encourage vaccination against influenza.
- Parishes should provide educational materials for parishioners. Information and educational materials can be found at
  - [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).
  - [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).
  - [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).
- Parishioners and staff experiencing fever with a sore throat or cough should stay home.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette.
  - Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue.
  - Throw away the tissue after use.
  - Wash hands or use a hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
  - Wash hands often.
  - Use a hand sanitizer.
  - Staff who prepare communion elements, meals and snacks should wash hands prior to preparation and serving.
- Parishes may consider implementing these additional suggestions.
  - Have hand sanitizer available for parishioners to use before entering the church.
  - You may consider not shaking hands.
  - If doctrine will allow, consider replacing the common communion cup with individual cups during the influenza season.
- Parishes should utilize parish nurses if available to help provide education and outreach to parishioners.
- Churches often can help make sure that ill parishioners have the support needed for recovery, especially if recovery is in the home.

For more information, contact the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Disease Control, at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.