

What You Can Do About the Flu

A Guide for UW-Platteville Students Provided by UWP Student Health Services

H1N1 influenza (a.k.a. “swine flu”) first appeared in the U.S. in the spring of 2009 and continued to infect people throughout the summer. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this new strain of influenza seems to be particularly infectious to people between ages 5 and 24, so all college campuses are preparing for the possibility that a lot more people than usual could get sick this year. Please help protect your own health and that of our campus community by learning what precautions you can take to lower the risk of spreading or contracting influenza and making a Personal Influenza Plan just in case you do get sick.

Precautions and Planning

1. Get your own thermometer, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, tissues, and surgical mask.
2. Maintain your own supply of hand soap and/or gel hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content).
3. Put UWP Student Health Services in your phone: (608) 342-1891.
4. Bookmark <http://www.uwplatt.edu/stuhlthsvcs/>. Updates about H1N1 will be posted on this site.
5. Make a **Personal Influenza Plan**. Do you have any health condition that might put you at higher risk for more severe illness, according to the CDC? Where will you recuperate if you get sick? How will you travel there? Where do you keep the contact info for everyone you should alert if you have to self-isolate (Residence Hall staff, instructors, etc.)? Use the information that follows to help you think through your plan.
6. Don’t spread or fall for rumors! If there is ever any disruption to campus operations, you will be notified. If your class is temporarily canceled, you will be notified by your instructor or department.
7. Start a good hand washing habit. Always wash with soap or hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds before eating, drinking, or preparing food; after using the bathroom; and if you cough or sneeze into a tissue.
8. Practice coughing and sneezing into your sleeve. Viruses can’t stay viable as long or spread as easily from there as they can from your hands.
9. Try to keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash hands more often if you smoke or bite your nails.
10. When seasonal flu shots are offered, get one. (For UWP students, available at SHS for \$12).
11. When H1N1 flu shots are offered, get one.
12. If you are in close contact with someone who has the flu...don’t panic, and don’t blame. Influenza may be very common on campus this fall, and people may get sick despite their best efforts. Most students will not need to take any special actions based on ordinary exposure. However, if you have a “high-risk” medical condition, (asthma for which you take daily medication; other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system; or kidney, liver, or neurological disorder), contact your healthcare provider promptly. Medications may be recommended to prevent influenza infection in some cases.

Know the differences between symptoms of the common cold and symptoms of the flu:

Cold	Flu
comes on gradually	comes on quickly
fever unlikely	fever probable
cough possible	dry cough possible
sore throat possible	sore throat possible
stomach feels okay	vomiting, diarrhea possible
body aches unlikely	body aches possible
chills unlikely	chills possible
stuffy/runny nose possible	stuffy/runny nose possible

**If You Do Get Sick...
Activate Your Personal Influenza Plan**

Take your temperature. If you have a fever (100°F/ 37.8°C or higher), you must stay home from work and class until you have been completely fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 24 hours, and you feel well. For most people, this will be 3 to 5 days, but it could be longer.

If you have a “high-risk” medical condition (asthma for which you take daily medication; other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system; or kidney, liver, or neurological disorder), contact your health care provider promptly. Although antiviral medications are not recommended for most healthy individuals, they are recommended for some “high-risk” cases and should be taken as soon as possible. Antibiotics do not have any effect because influenza is caused by a virus.

Most people recover fully, on their own, without medical treatment. Drink fluids to stay hydrated, get plenty of rest, eat what you can, and use ibuprofen and acetaminophen, as directed, to manage fever and body aches. Contact your healthcare provider if you experience any of the warning signs listed below.

Report in to Housing. If you live in the residence halls, please notify your RA via e-mail or phone that you have flu-like symptoms and any other pertinent information (whether you have called Student Health Services and worked with them on this issue, how/when/if you are planning to travel home or go to an alternative location such as a nearby relative's home to recuperate, if you need help getting a sick meal request, etc.). Residence hall students are encouraged to travel home or to an alternative location to recuperate. Generally, the same suggestions and procedures apply to students in residence halls as to other students. Self-isolate, utilize good handwashing etiquette, use precautionary coughing and sneezing procedures, consider using a surgical mask to help shield others, maintain a reasonable distance from other people, clean common surfaces with sanitizer, etc.

Communicate. Remember to cancel any appointments (with your advisor, dentist, etc.), and contact your professors, and employer to let them know you have influenza symptoms and cannot return to class or work until you're better (including completely fever-free). Use the telephone or email to make contact. As with any illness, you will be responsible for getting class notes you have missed and making arrangements to make up work after you recover. All faculty are being alerted that the campus is asking students to stay away from class if they are sick; in fact, they are receiving the same instruction, to stay home from teaching class if they get the flu.

Tell your “close contacts” you may have flu. That means roommates/housemates and officemates. Also, any friends, lab partners, etc., that you spent time with in the 24 hours before you started to feel sick. That way, if any of them has a “high-risk” health condition, they can contact their healthcare provider for advice and possibly medication.

Self-Isolate. While you are self-isolating, you should not go to the library, the PSC, or any social events. If you must leave your room, use hand sanitizer before going out, consider using a surgical mask to cover your nose and mouth; this will help to shield others from coughs and sneezes.

Flu viruses typically survive on surfaces for 2 to 8 hours, so do not share towels, clothing, eating utensils, telephones, keyboards, remote controls, etc., while you are infectious. Standard cleaning products should be sufficient to remove virus from surfaces. A bleach solution is not necessary, but water alone is not enough.

If possible, use a separate bathroom while you are sick. Utilize the above mentioned precautions regarding handwashing, shielding others from coughs and sneezes, cleaning common surfaces, emptying your own wastebasket of used tissues, taking out your own trash, etc. When you recover, wash your own sheets and towels rather than asking someone else to do the laundry.

The good news? If the thing that made you sick was H1N1, you can’t get it again. But you can still catch colds, seasonal influenza, and other flu-like illnesses, so keep up the hand washing! Because you won’t necessarily know which virus made you sick, seasonal and H1N1 vaccination are still recommended.

Seek Medical Attention if You Develop any of the Following:

- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - severe or persistent vomiting
 - confusion or sudden dizziness
- flu symptoms that improve but then return suddenly with fever and worse cough

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), advice current as of September 4, 2009

Student Health Services, (608) 342.1891, email: uwpshs@uwplatt.edu,
<http://www.uwplatt.edu/stuhlthsvcs/>