



## A Guide for Students in University Housing

# What You Can Do About the Flu

H1N1 influenza (a.k.a. “swine flu”) first appeared in the U.S. last spring 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 must prepare for the possibility that a lot more people than usual could get sick this year. Please help protect your own health and that of your 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. For more information, go to [flu.wisc.edu](http://flu.wisc.edu).

### Precautions and Planning

- **Get your own thermometer, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and tissues.**
- **Maintain your own supply of hand soap and/or gel hand sanitizer** (at least 60% alcohol content).
- **Put University Health Services in your phone:** (608) 265-5600.
- **Bookmark [flu.wisc.edu](http://flu.wisc.edu) and watch it regularly.** The only thing we can be certain of is that the situation will change throughout the semester, but we can’t predict exactly how, so you should keep checking in.
- **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 Life staff, instructors, etc.)? Use the information on the reverse side of this sheet to help you think through your plan.
- **Don’t spread or fall for rumors!** Watch for emails from [pandemicinfo@mhub.uwpd.wisc.edu](mailto:pandemicinfo@mhub.uwpd.wisc.edu). If there is ever any disruption to campus operations, it will be posted on [flu.wisc.edu](http://flu.wisc.edu) or will come from the pandemicinfo email address. If your class is temporarily canceled, you will be notified by your instructor or department.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Try to keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth.** Wash hands more often if you smoke or bite your nails.
- **When seasonal flu shots are offered, get one** (cost: \$0 at UHS).
- **When H1N1 flu shots are offered, get them** (cost: \$0 at UHS).
- **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” condition** (asthma for which you take daily medication; other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system; or kidney, liver, blood, or neurological disorders), contact your healthcare provider promptly. For UHS: (608) 265-5600. Medications may be recommended to prevent influenza infection in some cases.

Cold vs. 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

See other side for what to do if you do get sick. 

For more information on higher-risk medical conditions, see [www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/2009-10/pdf/certain\\_medical.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/2009-10/pdf/certain_medical.pdf)



## If You Do Get Sick...

### Activate the Personal Influenza Plan you made at the beginning of the semester.

**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.

**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, blood, or neurological disorders), contact your health care provider promptly. For University Health Services: (608) 265-5600. 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. Call your healthcare provider if your symptoms are not improving after 3 to 4 days. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of the symptoms listed in the chart below.

**Report in to Housing.** If you live in University Housing, you must promptly alert housing staff that you have flu-like symptoms so you can be issued a surgical mask. People with flu generally feel weak and achy for a few days to a week. If you live in a residence hall, we strongly recommend that you recuperate at your parents’ home, or the home of a nearby relative; if it is possible for you to relocate without using public transportation, please do so. In some cases, you may be asked to relocate to a different residence hall room while you are infectious.

**Communicate.** Remember to cancel any appointments (with your advisor, dentist, etc.), and contact your professors, teaching assistants, and employer to let them know you have influenza symptoms and cannot return to

class or at work until you’re better (including completely fever-free). 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 Union, the SERF, the NAT, or any social events, and you should avoid public transportation. If you must leave your room, use hand sanitizer before going out, cover your nose and mouth with a surgical mask, and 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 disinfectant cleaning products should be sufficient to remove virus from surfaces, but water alone is not enough.

**If possible, use a separate bathroom** while you are sick. Wear a mask when you leave your room to use a shared bathroom. When you recover, wash your own sheets and towels. Empty your wastebasket of used tissues, etc., and take out the trash yourself.

**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 immediate medical attention if you develop any of the following:

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

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm)

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), advice current as of August 19, 2009