



## A Guide for UW–Madison Students

# 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 (see list below). Where will you recuperate if you get sick? If you live alone, who will help if you need groceries or other supplies brought to you? Where do you keep the contact info for everyone you should alert if you have to self-isolate (Instructors, employer, etc.)? Use the information on this 2-page 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, students with “high-risk” conditions should call their healthcare providers promptly, as medication may be recommended in some cases to prevent influenza. For UHS: (608) 265-5600
- **“High-risk” medical conditions are defined as:** asthma or other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system; or kidney, liver, blood, or neurological disorders. “High-risk” doesn’t mean you’re at higher risk of contracting influenza. But these conditions are associated with a higher possibility of complications if you do get flu.

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

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** (listed on other page), call your health care provider. 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.

**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. (Antibiotics do not have any effect because influenza is caused by a virus.) Call a health care 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.

**Go to your recuperation location.** People with flu generally feel weak, achy, and fatigued for a few days to a week. Some people will be able to go to a nearby relative’s home to recuperate. This is strongly recommended for students living in University Housing; if you can relocate without using public transportation, please do so. If you will be staying in a household you share with others, avoid sharing common spaces with them while you’re sick. If you live alone, call a friend to bring supplies to your door rather than going shopping.

**Try to stay in one room with the door closed.** If someone is helping care for you, make sure that person does not have a “high-risk” condition, and always wear a surgical mask or bandanna over your face while that person is in the room with you. If possible, use a separate bathroom while you are sick. Whenever you leave your room, use hand sanitizer before exiting, and keep your mouth covered until you are back in your room. Everyone in the household should wash their hands well and often and use disposable disinfectant wipes on high-touch shared

surfaces, such as doorknobs, bathroom faucets, and refrigerator handles. (See Cleaning Recommendations for Households and Individual Rooms, available at [flu.wisc.edu](http://flu.wisc.edu).)

**Communicate.** Cancel any appointments (with your advisor, dentist, etc.), and contact your professors, TAs, and employer to let them know you have influenza symptoms and cannot return to class or at work until you’re better (including 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 students are supposed to stay home if they are sick; and they are being asked to stay home from teaching 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.** You should not go to the library, the Union, the SERF, the NAT, restaurants, or any social events, and you should avoid public transportation. If you go out, cover your nose and mouth with a surgical mask, bandanna, or tissues; 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, keyboards, remote controls, etc., while you are infectious. Standard cleaning products should be sufficient to remove virus from surfaces, but water alone is not enough.

**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