



Cowell Student Health Center

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

408-554-4501 After Hours Nurse Advice 408-554-4880

Health Information Sheet

H1N1 Influenza

H1N1 is a new influenza (flu) virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries are also reporting people sick with this new virus. Most U.S. cases have not been severe and are equal in severity to seasonal influenza. Since this is a new virus people have little or no immunity. A vaccine is being developed and we anticipate it will be available after mid-October.

Symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose and congestion, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with this new virus.

This new virus spreads from person-to-person, in much the same way the regular seasonal flu viruses spread, most often when you cough or sneeze. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air, and if another breathes those in, they may become infected as well. In addition, germs can spread when a person touches cough or sneeze "droplets" on a surface like a desk, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

You have been evaluated or consulted with Cowell Student Health Center related to your Influenza-Like Illness. You will probably feel sick for several days. It is important that you follow these home care recommendations:

- Stay home or in your dorm room for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- You will need to "self-isolate". This means you need to keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep others from getting sick. You should not attend classes, work, parties, athletic events, etc. You should not have visitors in your room /home while you are ill.
- Drink plenty of fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks) to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Continue to cover your cough and wash your hands often to prevent spreading the virus to others. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Do not share utensils, water bottles, etc.
- If your practitioner prescribed antiviral medication, take all of it as directed.
- Take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) and/or ibuprofen and cough medicine. These medicines do not need to be taken regularly if your symptoms improve. Be sure to follow the directions for each medication.
- Limit your contact with others and maintain a distance of 6 feet from people. If this cannot be avoided, you should wear a surgical mask.
- Have a friend get your meals for you. You should not be going out of your room for meals or errands. Remember, when your friend enters your room you will need to put your mask on.
- If you live on campus and have family or friends close by, it is advised you stay with them as it will be easier to maintain "self-isolation". Utilize a private car or taxi for transportation to limit contact with others.
- If you need to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask to cover your mouth & nose.
- Dispose of used tissues and other disposable items in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used items. Dishes can be washed with hot soapy water. Clothing/Linens may be washed as usual. Clean bathroom and other commonly used areas frequently.

Please see http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm for more detailed information on caring for sick people in the home.

Seek emergency care if you are experiencing any of these symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Please see <http://www.scu.edu/cshc/local-hospitals.cfm> for a list of urgent care centers and local hospitals, in the event Cowell Student Health Center is closed.