

H1N1 Flu September 18th Update for SSU from the Student Health Center

As anticipated, H1N1 2009 (swine) flu has come to SSU, and the number of students ill with this condition is growing. The Student Health Center many other aspects of campus operations are in our planned Pandemic Flu operational mode, which is regularly revised and updated consistent with CDC recommendations. We are relying on students and other members of the campus community to stay informed and participate effectively in prevention and response efforts.

Flu viruses are transmitted when infected people cough, sneeze, or contaminate objects by touching them. Because H1N1 is so widespread and can be transmitted by infected people up to a day or so before they feel or look sick, individual and campus prevention efforts must be constant, consistent, and universal, as must responses to flu-like illness.

1. Vaccines: Get immunized as soon as possible against seasonal flu and H1N1:

- The Student Health Center (SHC) will begin offering **seasonal flu vaccine** to SSU students only at the Student Health Center (SHC) as soon as vaccine arrives **in early October**, in accordance with CDC priority guidelines.
- **H1N1 2009 vaccine** has just been approved by the FDA and should be released **later this Fall**. The SHC has already requested vaccine from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). Vaccine will be offered to SSU students only as vaccine supplies and staffing permit. We will follow CDHS and CDC requirements in determining recipient priorities. The earliest will be younger students with health conditions that place them at risk for influenza complications (obesity, asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, chronic neuromuscular, heart or kidney disease, immune dysfunction, etc.), followed by other students with these conditions, followed by the rest of the student population in CDHS and the CDC priority order: See www.cdc.gov/h1n1/flu/vaccination/acip.
- County Public Health is arranging community immunization programs as are other healthcare providers.
- **Use any venue that is timely and available to you** to get seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccine once it is released.
- Seasonal flu vaccine is already available at some chain pharmacies. See the Lung Association's link for detailed information: www.flucliniclocator.org

2. Avoid Exposure

- **Don't share personal items** like drinks, food, towels, or unwashed utensils.
- **Clean hands often** with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- **Keep your living and working area clean** – wipe down faucets, door handles, keyboards, etc.
- **Try to stay 6 feet away** from people with fever and other flu-like symptoms.
- **Encourage people with flu-like symptoms to stay home** and wear a surgical mask covering the mouth and nose if and when there is no way they can avoid moments near other people.

3. Be prepared:

- **Have a thermometer, hand sanitizer, surgical face masks & ibuprofen or acetaminophen** on hand.
- **If you have health insurance**, keep your insurance card with you. Know the advice line and authorization phone numbers for your insurance company.
- **Keep your immune system ready to fight germs** by following a healthy lifestyle.

4. How will I know if I have the flu?

- **Symptoms of the flu include:** Fever of greater than 100 degrees, plus sudden onset of severe cough or sore throat, muscle aches, headache, fatigue - sometimes vomiting or diarrhea in addition. See *Is it a Cold or Influenza* at www.sonoma.edu/shc/cold_or_flu.pdf.
- **The California Department of Health Services** advises that the combination of sudden onset of the constellation of symptoms described above is enough to make a clinical diagnosis of influenza during this stage of the outbreak.
- **Lab testing is not recommended:** Only CDHS sites can perform confirmatory H1N1 testing. They are limiting this to hospitalized patients. A medical office based quick flu test doesn't adequately detect or rule out H1N1, and is not recommended by CDHS.
- **Take your temperature** with a thermometer: Fever is a key indicator for flu like illness and of recovery.

5. What should I do if I get flu-like symptoms or someone I live with does?

- **Most people are expected to recover from H1N1 and seasonal flu without needing a medical visit.**
- **Stay home & away from others** – wear a surgical mask covering your mouth and nose if others are present.
- **Self isolation** should persist for 24 hours without fever and without the use of fever reducing medicines.
- **Follow basic self care measures** including rest, fluids, acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, not aspirin) when you have aches or fever of 101 degrees or more.
- **Antiviral medications** have side effects, are marginally effective in uncomplicated flu, and are indicated only in patients with the specific medical conditions than place them at additional risk of influenza complications.
- Otherwise healthy individuals with moderate illness or who are recovering without complication should follow CDC guidelines for self care at home rather than going out to the doctor, both to avoid spreading germs and also so doctors can focus on the more seriously ill.
- **Those who develop severe symptoms (rapid or difficult breathing, fever ≥ 102 that persists for 2-3 days and those who develop influenza symptoms and are pregnant, obese, or have significant chronic medical conditions** should contact their health care provider promptly, as early treatment with antivirals may be warranted.
- **If you need to contact a healthcare provider**, telephone the office before appearing for care so they can give guidance and prepare for your arrival if it is determined that you need to have a medical visit.
- **Although most patients will not require any or only limited medical attention, some patients may be so ill that a prompt urgent care center or hospital emergency room visit is the best option.** Information about local after hours care options can be found at www.sonoma.edu/shc/after_hours.pdf
- In adults with influenza, warning signs suggesting the need for urgent medical attention include:
 - 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
- **Follow CDC recommendations:**
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm> — guidelines on what to do if you're sick with flu
 - http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm — what to do when someone you live with is ill with flu like symptoms.
- **Sick students should notify their professors** by phone or e-mail and follow their instructions to avoid falling behind academically.

5. Watch for SSU-specific updates by campus e-mail or on SSU websites:

- **SSU Student Health Center:** <http://www.sonoma.edu/shc/> has information designed especially for SSU students. Topics include avoiding and coping with influenza, prevention measures, how to tell a cold from the flu, etc. Updates to this information including immunization clinics will be posted periodically.
- The SSU Home page at: <http://www.sonoma.edu/>

6. Other updated information about H1N1 2009 flu:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> — the most comprehensive source of H1N1 flu information.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm> — a synopsis of the most current information in Q & A format.

7. Please share this information with other SSU students, staff, parents, and family members.