

# Avoiding and Coping with Influenza

Applies to H1N1 2009 (Swine) AND Seasonal Flu  
SSU Student Health Center (SHC)

## 1. Avoid flu virus transmission and exposure:

- Always cover coughs and sneezes. Use your sleeve, elbow, or a tissue.
- Dispose of used tissues in the trash & wash hands immediately.
- Clean hands often with soap & water or alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Don't share contaminated or personal items with others (e.g. food, drink, utensils, unwashed towels, etc.)
- Keep your living & working areas clean – wipe down faucets, door handles, keyboards, etc.
- Avoid close contact with others who are ill.
- Keep your immune system healthy and ready to fight germs by following a healthy lifestyle.
- Get seasonal **and** H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available to you.

## 2. How to tell if you might have the flu:

- **Symptoms include** the sudden onset of shaking chills or fever  $>100^{\circ}$  plus significant cough, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, fatigue, etc.
- **Take your temperature with a thermometer.** Fever is a key indicator of flu-like illness and of recovery.
- Read *Cold or Influenza, Which is It?* on the other side of this paper.
- Lab testing for H1N1flu is not currently recommended by Public Health Officials.

## 3. What to do if you get flu symptoms:

- **Most people are expected to recover from the flu without needing to go out for a medical visit**
- **Stay home** and away from other people while you are ill.
- Continue self isolation until 24 hours have elapsed with no fever **AND** no fever reducing medicines.
- **Wear a surgical mask covering your mouth and nose** any time you can't avoid being near others.
- Use a new mask daily and when soiled. Dispose of your mask directly in the trash after use.
- Notify roommates & housemates. Also notify Residential Life staff if you live in the Residence Halls.
- Notify professors by phone or e-mail to avoid falling behind academically.
- **Take good care of yourself** – rest, fluids, food, & acetaminophen or ibuprofen for muscle aches or fever.
- **Antiviral medications** have significant side effects, are only marginally effective in uncomplicated flu, and according to the Centers for Disease Control should **only** be prescribed in medically severe or high complication risk circumstances (see below). The Student Health Center follows CDC guidelines.
- **If you need medical attention or have concerns, telephone** the Student Health Center or another healthcare provider **before appearing for care** so they can provide guidance or prepare for your arrival if it is determined that you need to be seen.

## 4. Special Circumstances for those with flu-like illness:

- **If you are pregnant or have significant chronic medical conditions** (e.g. asthma, diabetes immune suppression, obesity, chronic neuromuscular disease, etc.) **you are at increased risk of flu complications** and should contact your healthcare provider promptly, as early treatment with anti-virals may be warranted.
- **Urgent medical attention at a hospital or urgent care center may be warranted for patients with severe illness.** Don't delay seeking medical attention if you develop any of these symptoms: (rapid, difficult breathing, pain or pressure in chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, intense persistent vomiting, several days of fever  $\geq 102^{\circ}$  or if flu-like symptoms improve but then return with high fever & worse cough.

## 5. Watch for flu updates and information specifically for SSU students at [www.sonoma.edu/shc/](http://www.sonoma.edu/shc/)

## 6. Get thermometers, hand sanitizer, & surgical masks at the Student Health Center or a drug store.

## 7. 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](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm) — what to do when someone you live with has flu like symptoms.