

Pitt's H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Plan – Fall Semester, 2009

Information and Recommendations for Students

- Letters are mailed on August 5, 2009, to incoming students' homes prior to their arrival on campus, alerting them to the services, location, and phone number of Pitt's Student Health Service, suggesting contents of a medical kit, and updating them on the status of H1N1.
- An August 31, 2009 e-mail is sent to all students, explaining the steps they should take if they or their roommates develop flu-like symptoms. Information also is mailed to parents.
- The Student Health Service provides a tip sheet for managing the flu on its Web site — <http://www.studhlth.pitt.edu> — and printed copies are available in the Student Health clinic.
- A poster campaign is launched on all campuses, emphasizing good hygiene to prevent the spread of the flu. A second poster campaign is targeted for computer labs.
- A 24/7 hotline to Student Health is established for sick students to report influenza-like symptoms or seek information.

Information for Parents

- August 5, 2009 letters also are addressed to parents.
- A 24/7 hotline for parents is established through Panther Central.

Care for Ill Students

- Students who have flu-like symptoms should immediately call the Student Health hotline for advice, which may include suggestions

for over-the-counter fever-reducers or other common medications.

- Students who report flu-like symptoms are advised to return to their homes for family care, if they live within reasonable driving distance and have someone to drive them.
- Students with symptoms who are unable to go home are advised to stay in their dorm rooms, if on campus, or in their apartments, if off-campus. Self-isolation should continue until 24 hours after fever has gone without fever-reducing medication. Instructions are given on the importance of fastidious hygiene.
- Students with symptoms who do not go home will be provided a flu kit containing a thermometer, facemask, and information.
- Facemasks are recommended for those with flu-like symptoms, to be worn when in close contact with others, such as roommates and those delivering necessities or medical care.
- All residence hall students with symptoms are instructed to make arrangements with Dining Services to have boxed meals delivered to their rooms.
- All off-campus students with symptoms are instructed to ask a friend to arrange for food to be delivered.
- Each ill student who notifies the hotline will be contacted at least once a day by University personnel to assess his or her needs.
- Students with symptoms are told emphatically not to attend classes, but to contact professors by phone or e-mail to arrange for make-up work or online instruction, if available.
- Students are informed that if their flu-like symptoms develop into complications like shortness of breath, dizziness, confusion, severe vomiting or high fever, they should seek emergency medical care.

- Students are informed that if they have flu-like symptoms and also have underlying chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, or asthma, are pregnant or may be pregnant, or have compromised immune systems, they should seek medical advice. Such individuals may require additional care, including, in some cases, hospitalization, since they are at higher risk of serious complications from influenza.

Protecting Well Students

- Roommates of students with flu symptoms are advised to maintain a high level of hygiene by washing their hands often and wiping down common surfaces, like keyboards, before using them. They should not share drinks or utensils with ill roommates.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a flu patient is contagious for 24 hours prior to exhibiting symptoms, and the roommate is, therefore, possibly already exposed to the virus. Roommates are advised to self-monitor for symptoms and call Student Health or their RAs with concerns.

- Roommates with underlying chronic medical conditions are advised to immediately contact the Student Health Service hotline when their roommate has flu-like symptoms so that additional measures can be taken.
- Well students and sick students are instructed to use separate bathroom facilities (whenever possible) during the period of illness.
- The University's maintenance staff will clean surfaces in common areas and bathrooms used by students with flu-like symptoms more often than usually scheduled.
- Hand-sanitizer stations will be placed near all dining areas, in all residence halls, near elevators, in all University-operated apartments buildings, in computing centers, and other high-traffic

areas. Advice disseminated that these sanitizers should be used as often as possible before and after touching the face or common surfaces, such as elevator buttons, cafeteria trays, or computer lab keyboards. Students are also urged to carry pocket-sized alcohol-based hand-sanitizer for use when the stations are not available.

Classes and Campus Activities

- The Provost's office will contact professors and instructors with suggestions for preparing for student absences by planning make-up assignments or putting lesson materials on-line.
- Because most students with flu-like symptoms will not be seen by a doctor, medical excuses for class absences of typical duration will not be required.
- Other campus activities will proceed on a case-by-case basis. Cancellation of classes, gatherings, or social events are not recommended at this time. All ill individuals are advised that they should not be present at group settings.

Faculty and Staff

- In August, faculty and staff members receive a letter from Human Resources advising them about H1N1. They are asked to self-isolate at home if experiencing flu-like symptoms and contact their personal physicians, if warranted. Faculty members who develop flu-like symptoms should contact their department chair to make alternate arrangements for instruction.

Vaccination

- When an H1N1 flu vaccine is available (projected for October, 2009), the University will offer it to all eligible parties, as

established by CDC guidelines, at each of Pitt's campuses. Specific information will be given at the time.

- The campus community will be urged to get seasonal flu vaccine when it is available (projected for September). The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to afford any protection from H1N1, but will for other flu viruses expected to be present late in the winter.

Continual Assessment

- The Student Health Service will record and track reported flu-like illness among the student population and will monitor reports from University personnel charged with making daily contact with ill students. This will help identify clusters of illness and focus prevention measures and advice.
- The multidisciplinary University committee charged with H1N1 flu response will meet throughout the duration of the pandemic, advise leadership on its status, adjust strategies as needed, and communicate with the campus community on the topic.