



University of Pittsburgh

Division of Student Affairs

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August 31, 2009

Dear Parent,

The University of Pittsburgh is concerned about the health of your child on campus in light of the predictions about the spread of the H1N1 flu virus ("swine flu") this fall. This virus has occurred frequently around the world since May. Cases are now being reported in the Pittsburgh region and on the Pitt campuses. Following up on the first letter sent to all students by the director of Pitt's Student Health Service on August 5, we have taken more actions and want to update you on our efforts to help our students avoid contracting the virus and assisting those students who have contracted the virus.

The University administration—following the guidelines of the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in consultation with the Allegheny County Health Department, Pitt's experts in our Graduate School of Public Health, and our partners at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center—has taken the following actions:

- ∞ Students who develop flu-like symptoms—fever of 100 degrees F (37.8 C) accompanied by cough, runny or stuffy nose, sneezes, headaches, body aches, chills or fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting—are to immediately contact the H1N1 hotline (412-624-2222), which will advise them on the proper next steps. Those roommates of sick students who have an underlying medical condition or concerns for their own well-being should contact Student Health to schedule an appointment;
- ∞ The University has created a hotline to Student Health that answers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for students reporting symptoms. The student hotline number is 412-624-2222;
- ∞ A second hotline, for parents, has been set up through Panther Central. That number is 412-648-1100;
- ∞ Students with flu symptoms who are within a reasonable driving distance should return to their homes to recuperate. It is recommended that students returning to their homes have someone drive them;
- ∞ Students with flu symptoms who cannot travel to their homes should remain in their residence hall rooms or apartments until their fever is gone for 24 hours, without use of medication. Those students who cannot return home should make arrangements to have meals delivered to their on-campus residence hall rooms through their Resident Assistants or roommates or, in the case of off-campus living, should ask a friend to arrange for meals. Dining halls and other eateries should be avoided;
- ∞ Students who are ill should not have visitors. Those students who have alerted Student Health that they are sick with flu symptoms will be given a mask to wear when someone else is present, to avoid spreading the virus. The flu is spread person to person through respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes that land either directly on another person or are transferred from common surfaces, like doorknobs and keyboards;

- ∞ Students with flu symptoms should not attend classes. They should contact professors by e-mail or phone as soon as possible to alert them to the situation and explore ways in which to make up work or view course materials online, if available. Since most students with flu will not be seen by a doctor, a doctor's excuse for absences of typical duration will not be expected;
- ∞ In most cases, the symptoms will abate within a week without outside intervention. In rare cases, a student may need to be hospitalized if such complications as shortness of breath, sudden dizziness, or persistent vomiting develop;
- ∞ A University staff member will contact sick students once a day to assess their needs;
- ∞ Among the precautions the University has taken is the placement of hand-sanitizer stations in food areas, residence halls, and other high-traffic locations on campus;
- ∞ Pitt's plan is being conveyed in a number of ways, including the e-mailing of information directly to our students and a poster campaign aimed at the general campus populations. A second poster campaign is targeted specifically at computer labs, where keyboards require special cleaning before and after use; and
- ∞ All H1N1 information is also posted on the H1N1 site linked from the home page of www.pitt.edu and on the my.pitt.edu portal, both accessed regularly by students.

To date, only a few students at Pitt have reported mild flu-like symptoms. These symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu that occurs every year.

The University is monitoring this situation very closely and staying in contact with public health experts in the event a change in strategy is prudent.

The University needs the assistance and cooperation of our students and their parents to effectively and efficiently manage the challenges presented by this new flu strain. By diligently and compassionately working together, we can ensure that the University is a healthy environment in which our students can live and learn.

Best regards,



Kathy Humphrey
Vice Provost and Dean of Students