

**Student Health Service**

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To parents of University of Iowa students:

We are writing to update you about what you can do to protect your student, and the rest of your family, from influenza viruses throughout the school year. You may wish to keep this letter and refer to it in the future.

As you are very likely aware, novel H1N1 influenza is widespread throughout the world.

Fortunately, the vast majority of cases are mild and, at this point, the virus appears no more virulent or severe than most seasonal influenzas. For those reasons, you should think about the novel H1N1 virus as yet another strain of influenza and take the same basic approach that helps protect all of us from any seasonal influenza outbreak.

Classes and Activities

Classes and other activities at UI will continue as scheduled this semester. Our health officials will monitor the campus situation. The Provost will make any decisions regarding the suspension of classes. Any such decision will be communicated broadly to students, parents, faculty and staff through e-mail and other methods.

Public Health Precautions

We are requesting all UI students, faculty, staff and the general public to take the following influenza/respiratory disease precautions:

- Get vaccinated for influenza
- Avoid going out in public when ill
- Cover your nose and mouth with the crook of an arm or sleeve, not your hand, when coughing or sneezing
- Throw used tissues in the trash
- Do not share food, drink, or utensils
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently—particularly after sneezing—or use an alcohol-based hand gel

Treatment and Response

Most people who contract an influenza virus will not need to seek a doctor's treatment. If your student becomes ill with influenza, he or she should remain at home or in their residence hall room until they are fever-free for 24 hours, which could take four to seven days. Students can call the Student Health Nurse Line at 319-335-9704 for guidance. Assistance is also available from the Call Center at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics when Student Health Service is closed. The Call Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can be reached at 319-384-8442.

In order to prevent the spread of disease, your student should not come to class or work, meet with other groups, attend office hours, or contact offices in person while he or she is ill. Based on this recommendation, instructors will not require students to report to a doctor or to Student Health Service to verify a flu-like illness if a student is ill. Students should complete an illness-absence form (http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/H1N1_absence_form.pdf) when well enough to do so and return it to the instructor. Their grades will not be penalized for absences that follow the recommendations of health authorities. However, students who miss class due to the flu will still be responsible for the entire semester's material, and these students will ordinarily need to make up the work they have missed.

People with influenza can be contagious for as much as one day before they have any symptoms. If your student has contact with someone who has influenza, it can take up to three days before he or she develops symptoms. If your student experiences any influenza symptoms within this time period, he or she should stay home or in their dorm room to limit the spread of the virus.

The symptoms of influenza include:

- Fever of 100 degrees F or higher
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue

Students who live in residence halls should contact University Housing for information on services to students with an influenza-like illness.

Students who are pregnant or have a chronic medical condition such as diabetes, cancer, asthma, heart or lung problems, or a weakened immune system, should consult with their physician or Student Health Service to see if treatment is needed.

If students experience any of the following warning signs, they should seek emergency medical care.

- 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

We certainly understand that some families may want to take their students who are ill with influenza home from Iowa City. Before doing so, it's a good idea to consult your family health care provider to determine any potential risks to your student or family associated with transporting students to other communities.

Medication and Vaccinations

The following vaccinations are expected to be available in the fall of 2009:

- **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone be vaccinated against seasonal influenza. This vaccine will be available for students at UI Student Health Service.
- **Novel H1N1 Vaccine:** Recent recommendations from the CDC have placed individuals under age 24 among the top priority groups for receiving the novel H1N1 vaccine. This vaccine is not yet available. More information will be available in the coming weeks regarding this vaccine.

Additional Information

More information on influenza is available on the following websites:

- Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm
- <http://studenthealth.uiowa.edu>

If you have any questions, please contact the Student Health Service Nurse Line at 319-335-9704; by e-mail at student-health@uiowa.edu; or check our Student Health Service Website listed above for updates.

We are committed to keeping all students healthy. Although we can't eliminate the spread of influenza, our collective efforts can significantly minimize its reach and impact.

Sincerely,



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Student Health Service



Daniel Fick, MD
UI Campus Medical Officer



Lisa James, RN, MSN
Interim Administrative Director
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