

Illinois State Prepares for H1N1

Illinois State University is preparing for a potential upswing in illnesses from the novel H1N1 influenza virus that appeared last spring. Based on guidelines for universities from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Illinois State is recommending the following for faculty, staff and students:

Influenza Prevention

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Make use of hand sanitizer dispensers that will be located in campus facilities.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or upper part of your arm, *not* your hands.
- University staff members will establish frequent cleaning schedules of facilities, especially high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, bathrooms, tables, desks, etc.

Vaccination

- Plan to get the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People under age 25 are among those recommended to receive the vaccine first.
- Plan to get a seasonal flu vaccine, which will not protect against H1N1, but will help keep you healthy.

If you have influenza

- Stay home if you are sick. Do not return to class or work until 24 hours after you are free of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Students living on campus should return home (by private car, not public transportation) during their illness to avoid spreading the virus.
- Residence hall students unable to go home with should remain in their room and receive meals and care from a single person. Contact University Housing Services at 438-8611 for assistance.

Flexible absence policies

- Students, faculty and staff members will not be required to obtain a doctor's note to confirm illness or recovery. Doctor's offices and medical facilities may be unable to provide such documentation in a timely manner.
- Policies on missed classes, exams and late assignments should not prevent students from staying home when ill or prompt them to return to class or take exams while still symptomatic and potentially infectious.
- Students missing class for 3 or more days should contact the Dean of Students Office at <http://www.deanofstudents.ilstu.edu/absences.shtml> .

Considerations for high risk students, faculty and staff

- H1N1 is different from seasonal influenza in that adults older than 65 do not yet appear to be at increased risk of novel H1N1-related complications. It also appears that H1N1 flu has caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years of age than older people.
- Call the doctor immediately if you have a medical condition that puts you at increased risk of severe illness from flu, are concerned about your illness, or develop severe symptoms such as increased fever, shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or rapid breathing.
- People considered at high-risk for complications from seasonal influenza are pregnant women; adults and children with asthma , diabetes or other chronic pulmonary, heart, liver, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular or metabolic diseases; adults and children with suppressed immune systems; children younger than five and those 65 and older.

H1N1 influenza is a respiratory illness. Symptoms of H1N1 are much the same as seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. While some people with H1N1 have also reported diarrhea and vomiting, they are not typical symptoms of influenza.

For more information, visit the Student Health Services Web site at www.shs.ilstu.edu or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov/.

This notice will be updated periodically. If you have questions or suggestions for additional bullet- points, please contact Brent Paterson, associate vice president for Student Affairs at 438-5451 or by e-mail at bgpater@ilstu.edu .