



UHCS Self-Care and Self-Isolation Recommendations for Students with Flu or Influenza-Like Illness

This information is provided as basic guidance for self-care. It is not offered as, nor intended to take the place of, personal medical advice.

Stay Home until You're completely Fever-Free

The CDC recommends that people who develop influenza-like illness (fever of at least 100°F/37.8°C with either cough or sore throat) should stay home and "self-isolate" until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever and fever symptoms (without fever-reducing medication). This guideline applies whether or not you are taking antiviral medication.

For most people, this is a period of **3 to 5 days**. People who work in a healthcare setting should stay home for 7 days from the onset of symptoms or until all symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer (for more about healthcare settings, see: http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control.htm).

"Self-Isolating" Means...

You should not go to class or work during this time. Cancel your appointments, and don't go to the library, the UC, Williams Center, restaurants, stores, or social gatherings. Avoid using public transportation. If you have relatives near enough to drive to pick you up, we strongly recommend that you recuperate at their house, particularly if you live in a residence hall. **Stay in a separate room with the door closed as much as possible, and use a separate bathroom from others in the household if you can.**

According to the CDC, people are most infectious (shed the most influenza virus) during the period when they have a fever. People may continue shedding virus, though at lower levels, for several days after fever ends, so even after you resume your activities, please continue frequent and thorough hand washing and shielding others by coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue.

Take Care of Yourself

- Drink fluids to stay hydrated.
- Get plenty of rest
- Manage your fever and body aches with ibuprofen and acetaminophen, as directed.
- Don't expect too much of yourself. People with flu generally feel weak, achy, and extremely fatigued for a few days to a week, so give yourself time to recover.
- **If your symptoms don't seem to be improving after 3 to 4 days, call your healthcare provider.**

Seek Medical Care if:

- Seek medical care as soon as possible after you develop symptoms if you:
- Are a pregnant woman
- Are under 19 years of age and receive chronic aspirin therapy
- Have asthma that requires daily use of medication
- Have chronic pulmonary, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease
- Have diabetes
- Have sickle cell disease
- Are immune-suppressed, including that caused by medication or HIV
- Have other chronic medical disease that you think may put you at higher risk for complications from influenza

Seek Medical Care immediately if you have ILI symptoms and develop:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Abdominal pain
- Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- Signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, or absence of urination,
- Confusion or have altered responsiveness
- Symptoms that initially improve then a worsening of fever and cough
- Any other concerns that you would like addressed

Students may call UHCS for an appointment at 472-1300 or call 911 for immediate medical care needs.

Protect Your “Household Contacts”

Tell the people you live with that you have the flu. People who have “high-risk” medical conditions should not be helping bring you food or medicine. “High-risk” does not mean a person has a greater chance of catching flu. It does mean that a person could get more serious symptoms if s/he did catch it. People with “high-risk” conditions (asthma or other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system; or blood, liver, kidney, or neurological disorders) should call their healthcare providers for advice; in some cases, medication may be prescribed to help prevent influenza.

People who live with you should step up their hand washing. You should wear a surgical mask or bandanna over your nose and mouth when you will be in close contact with them (within 6 feet), such as if they bring you food or medicine. Limit the number of people who help care for you.

Encourage everyone to use standard disinfectant household spray cleaners and disposable disinfectant wipes to wipe down commonly touched surfaces such as remote controls, bathroom faucets, doorknobs, and microwave and refrigerator door handles.

Flu is not spread through food or water, but it can spread through sharing dishes, cups, and utensils.

Be vigilant about your own hand washing and covering your cough. Have a separate towel clearly dedicated to each person in the household. When you recover, wash your own bed sheets and towels, and bag the trash from your room and take it straight to the outdoor trash container.

For more information: http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare_directions.htm

Tell Your Instructors and Employer You Will be out until You’re Better

Here’s an example of what you could say.

Dear _____,

On _____ date _____, I developed a fever and other symptoms that indicate I may have influenza. In accordance with CDC recommendations and the campus’s request, I will be staying home while I recover to help limit the spread of disease on campus. I expect to be out at least until _____ date _____. I know it will be my responsibility to make up the work I missed when I am well again. I’m sorry for the inconvenience.

If You Absolutely Must go out While you’re Sick...

Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the house. Cover your nose and mouth with a surgical mask or bandanna. Be vigilant about covering your cough with your sleeve, handkerchief, or tissues.

For additional information, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm> or <http://www.uww.edu/marketingandmedia/flu.php>