

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

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<http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/ehs>

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**August 7, 2009**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** NC State Community

**FROM:** Mary Bengtson, M.D., Medical Director, Student Health Services  
David Rainer, AVC, Environmental Health and Public Safety



**RE:** H1N1 Influenza Update

The North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services has indicated that H1N1 Influenza A virus is the predominant virus currently causing flu in North Carolina, and that cases have been reported throughout the United States and internationally. Representatives of NC State Environmental Health and Safety and Student Health continue to meet with campus groups to discuss the campus response to H1N1 flu, as well as review recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Information on the flu, both seasonal and H1N1 influenza A virus, is dynamic and evolving. For example, on August 6, 2009, CDC released revised recommendations for self-isolation for schools, businesses, and community settings from 7 days to "until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications" (Centers for Disease Control, <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm>). Please regularly consult <http://www.cdc.gov>, Student Health Services [http://www.ncsu.edu/student\\_health](http://www.ncsu.edu/student_health) or Environmental Health and Safety [www.ncsu.edu/ehs/pandemic/index.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/ehs/pandemic/index.htm) for H1N1 influenza information. Non-medical directives to campus, related to the University response to implementation of infectious disease events, will be issued after consultation and review with Executive Officers and outside authorities and posted on the Environmental Health and Public Safety website referenced above.

For additional information, a list of Frequently Asked Questions and NC State's response is included. Because of the number of questions, the FAQ is grouped by target audience (Parent/Student, Faculty, Management, General Information).

**cc:** Executive Officers  
Deans, Directors, Department Heads

## H1N1 INFLUENZA FAQ

### General Information

#### 1. What is H1N1 flu?

H1N1 is a new strain of influenza A and was originally called “swine flu” but now is called H1N1. A person does not get H1N1 from being around pigs or eating pork

#### 2. What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

- Fever over 100 degrees
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and diarrhea

#### 3. How is flu spread?

The flu virus is spread through contact with sick people or ‘sick’ objects. To reduce your exposure, distance yourself from sick individuals and wash your hands frequently after touching things that might have been contaminated by a sick person's touch, cough, or sneeze. Flu virus can live from minutes to hours (up to 8 hours) on surfaces.

#### 4. What is the incubation period for H1N1 flu?

Incubation time from exposure to symptoms is 1-7 days. A person is considered contagious (able to spread infection) 1 day before symptoms start and for an average of up to 7 days after. An infected person is likely more contagious on days with fever.

#### 5. HOW CAN I PREVENT THE FLU?

- Do not share food and drinks
- Do not touch your mouth, nose or eyes with contaminated hands
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand cleaners frequently
- When you greet people, don't shake hands or exchange kisses
- To protect others, if you develop sneezing and coughing, be sure to use tissues to wipe your nose and cover your mouth, and to throw the tissues in the trash

#### 6. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PRACTICE GOOD HAND HYGIENE?

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice) is the best way to keep your hands from spreading the virus.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol are also effective.
- If soap and water are not available and alcohol-based products are not allowed in the school, other hand sanitizers that do not contain alcohol may be useful for cleaning hands. However, they may not be as effective as alcohol-based sanitizers.

#### 7. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M PREGNANT AND I WORK IN OR ATTEND A SCHOOL?

Pregnant women are at higher risk of complications from flu and should speak

with their doctor as soon as possible if they develop a flu-like illness to find out whether they should take antiviral flu medicines. Early treatment with antiviral flu medicines is recommended for pregnant women who have the flu. Pregnant women and their doctors should know that they are part of the first priority group to receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.

**8. IS CAMPUS PLANNING TO PROVIDE VACCINATION CLINICS FOR THE FLU?**

- The University hosts several vaccination clinics each year. Seasonal flu clinic information is posted on the Human Resources website, under Benefits.
- Two shots, likely given three weeks apart, will be needed to protect against H1N1 influenza. Traditional flu vaccine (1 dose) should also be received.

**9. I HAD A ‘REGULAR’ FLU SHOT THIS YEAR. WILL THAT PROTECT ME FROM THE H1N1 FLU VIRUS?**

No. H1N1 flu is very different from other human flu strains. Vaccines for seasonal flu will not provide protection from novel H1N1 flu viruses. Vaccines are currently in development and information will be provided to the campus, as it is available.

**10. IS NC STATE PLANNING TO DISTRIBUTE FACEMASKS OR OTHER PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT TO CAMPUS?**

Following the advice of public health agencies, CDC and OSHA, NC State does not recommend the use of surgical masks, gloves, or other personal protective equipment for normal use to control exposure. Only mandatory employees categorized as “very high exposure risk” under OSHA will be included in respiratory protection planning.

**11. WHAT DOES WHO PHASE 6 MEAN?**

World Health Organization (WHO) phases are markers of transmissibility of a disease. There are six phases; phase 6 indicates a pandemic and is characterized by sustained human-to-human transmission. On June 11, 2009, WHO declared an Influenza Pandemic for H1N1 influenza ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

The severity of the pandemic is based on an index. This index, from the lowest category of 1 to the highest category of 5, helps determine the impact the virus will have on a community and the planning needed to reduce the impact.

**12. WHERE CAN I GET GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION?**

NC State maintains a series of resource materials and planning documents to educate our campus.

Orientation to Emergency Preparedness and Procedures:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/emergency-information/index.php>

University Infectious Disease Planning Information:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/ehs/pandemic/index.htm>

Student Health Services:

[http://www.ncsu.edu/student\\_health/whatsNew/influenzaupdate.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/student_health/whatsNew/influenzaupdate.html)

Outside resources provide additional information:

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/>

US Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

<http://www.flu.gov>

Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/en/>

### Parents and Students

#### **13. I AM A STUDENT AND HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH THE FLU (H1N1), WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If you have visited Student Health Services and are confirmed to have H1N1 flu, self-isolation is recommended to preventing the spread of the virus.

An individual with influenza is considered potentially contagious from 1 day before onset to 7 days after onset of the illness and is advised to stay at home for a minimum of 24 hours after fever resolves.

#### **14. MAY I ATTEND CLASSES IF I HAVE FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS?**

If you have had flu-like symptoms, The CDC, Wake County Human Services and NCSU Student Health Services recommends sick persons to prudently monitor symptoms, stay home and avoid close contact with others.

#### **15. HOW LONG SHOULD A SICK STUDENT STAY HOME?**

Current public health recommendations say that individuals with symptoms of flu should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not feel feverish, without using fever-reducing drugs.

Sick people should stay at home, except to go to the doctor's office, and should avoid contact with others. Keeping people with a fever at home may reduce the number of people who get infected. Because high temperatures are linked with higher amounts of virus shedding, people with a fever may be more contagious.

#### **16. WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO PREPARE FOR FLU DURING THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR?**

- Update emergency contact lists.
- Identify a separate room in the house for care of sick family members. Consider designating a single person as the main caregiver for anyone who gets sick.
- Have your family vaccinated for seasonal flu and H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

**17. WHEN SHOULD I GO TO STUDENT HEALTH FOR CARE?**

Contact your medical provider if symptoms are more than mild or if diagnosis is not certain. Follow medical provider's advice about treatment and self-isolation.

**18. IF MY ROOMMATE IS SICK, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO AND WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREVENT THE FLU?**

Exercise precautions to protect against flu while in the community or at the university. Self-monitor for symptoms while H1N1 activity is being reported. Self-isolate as needed.

If you are well, avoid sick people. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching things. Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes and consider contacting your medical provider if you have a known or suspected exposure to flu (to consider prophylactic anti-viral med).

If a sick person lives in a small space with a well roommate, it will be a challenge to self-isolate. If the sick and well continue to live in the same space while the sick person is contagious, the well person is potentially at risk of exposure to infection. The sick person should cover their cough or sneeze with tissue then discard, frequently clean hands, and frequently decontaminate things touched in the room. The well person can contact their healthcare provider to consider taking prophylactic anti-viral medication, such as Tamiflu, to prevent influenza.

If there is an option for the well roommate to stay somewhere else until the isolation period is over or for the sick person to go home to family or find another place to stay, that would lessen exposure of the well roommate.

If the sick person lives in a space with a private bedroom but shares other rooms, the sick person should preferentially spend time in the bedroom and minimize time in shared spaces. If shared spaces are visited, the sick person should decontaminate things that were touched, should cover cough or sneeze with tissue then discard, and should frequently clean hands.

**19. HOW DO PARENTS GET INFORMATION ON NC STATE'S PLANNING FOR THE FLU?**

NC State maintains a series of resource materials and planning documents to educate our campus.

Orientation to Emergency Preparedness and Procedures:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/emergency-information/index.php>

University Infectious Disease Planning Information:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/ehs/pandemic/index.htm>

Student Health Services:

[http://www.ncsu.edu/student\\_health/whatsNew/influenzaupdate.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/student_health/whatsNew/influenzaupdate.html)

Parent and Family Services, Student Affairs

[http://www.ncsu.edu/for\\_parents](http://www.ncsu.edu/for_parents)

**20. WHAT SHOULD I USE TO CLEAN MY DORM ROOM?**

You should decontaminate shared items periodically, such as telephones, refrigerator handles and doorknobs; do not share personal items, such as drinks, utensils and personal hygiene items.

Common household cleaners, such as bleach-containing cleaners, Lysol, or other cleaners should be effective.

**21. HOW DOES CDC'S GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE APPLY TO MY CHILD AT COLLEGE?**

If you would like to learn more about what to do if your child is in a college or university, please visit the Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines\\_colleges.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm)

Continue to monitor CDC's website for information about flu. CDC will continue to update the website and guidance recommendations as more is learned about the 2009 H1N1 influenza or flu conditions change.

**Faculty****22. MAY I ATTEND WORK IF I HAVE FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS?**

If you have had flu-like symptoms, per the recommendations of the Wake County Health Department and Student Health Services, you should prudently monitor your symptoms, stay home and avoid close contact with others.

**23. HOW SHOULD I ADVISE STUDENTS ABOUT THE FLU?**

- Remember that flu is spread by SICK PEOPLE or SICK THINGS (things contaminated with flu virus).
- Faculty can decrease exposure of students to SICK PEOPLE by making a strong statement to students early in the semester to stay home from class if sick with influenza and to seek medical attention, if appropriate.
- Faculty can decrease exposure of students to SICK THINGS by encouraging students to carry hand sanitizer and to clean their hands frequently and before and after touching shared items, such as keyboards and microscopes.

**24. HOW SHOULD I ADVISE STUDENTS WHO HAVE THE FLU?**

- A student diagnosed with flu should notify faculty by phone or e-mail that they will be away from class due to illness and should not expose the instructor by notifying in person.
- Student and instructor can develop a plan to keep up with course content and missed assignments or tests. The student may be too ill to be productive at all academically while away and should not be penalized if unable to keep up. Incomplete or medical drop may be necessary in some cases.

**25. IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR THE FLU, AM I REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE CLASS MEMBERS OF POSSIBLE EXPOSURE?**

The entire class does not routinely need to be notified when an individual enrolled in a class has a flu diagnosis. Flu is being seen throughout the community, as well

as on campus, so classmates are as likely to get exposed off campus as in the classroom. Good health practices to lessen risk of exposure, while on or off campus (avoiding the sick, cleaning hands), and self-monitoring for flu symptoms should occur as long as there is flu activity being reported in the community, not necessarily because there is a sick classmate.

**26. CAN THE VIRUS LIVE ON SURFACES, SUCH AS COMPUTER KEYBOARDS?**

Flu viruses may be spread when a person touches droplets left by coughs and sneezes on hard surfaces (such as desks, door knobs, keyboards or pens) and then touches his or her mouth or nose. Flu virus can survive minutes to hours on surfaces (up to 8 hours). It is not necessary to disinfect these surfaces beyond routine cleaning.

**Management**

**27. I AM AN EMPLOYEE AND HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH H1N1 FLU, DO I NEED TO NOTIFY MY SUPERVISOR?**

Yes, you should notify your supervisor and stay at home. Consult your health care provider about treatment and self-isolation

- Prescription anti-viral medications, Tamiflu and Relenza, are sometimes given to shorten the course of the flu and are most effective if given within 48 hours of symptoms starting. Anti-viral medications might not be necessary for those with mild flu symptoms.
- Anti-viral medication might not be necessary for all patients with H1N1 infection, such as those with mild symptoms.
- Monitor temperature and treat fever.
- Get extra rest and extra fluids.
- Contact your health care provider for more advice in treating symptoms and complications of H1N1 flu.

**28. HOW LONG SHOULD A SICK STAFF MEMBER STAY HOME?**

Current public health agency recommendations are that individuals with symptoms of flu should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever without using fever-reducing drugs.

**29. A CO-WORKER HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH H1N1 FLU IN MY OFFICE, WHO SHOULD DISINFECT THE OFFICE?**

Each staff, faculty and student should clean their own workspace. Housekeeping Services will not provide additional cleaning services for the flu. Disinfecting your work area is a sound practice to minimize the spread of germs. The virus can survive for minutes to hours on surfaces (up to 8 hours).

**30. WHAT SHOULD I USE TO CLEAN MY WORKSPACE?**

You should decontaminate shared items periodically, such as telephones, refrigerator handles and doorknobs. Do not share personal items, such as drinks, utensils and personal hygiene items.

Common household cleaners, such as bleach-containing cleaners, Lysol, or other cleaners should be effective.