

College of Alameda Cares

Fight the Flu!

Make cleanliness a priority

Keep a distance of six feet from each other, if necessary

Stay home if you are sick

Get a flu shot

Stay informed

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From the Office of the President:

The H1N1 influenza is already on our campus. Although the H1N1 flu itself is not more serious or lethal than the seasonal flu, I am encouraging staff, faculty and students to stay home if they think they are ill. The H1N1 virus may produce a more dangerous flu season, with many more people getting sick than during a regular flu season, because there is little or no immunity to this particular influenza strain in the human population.

The best and kindest thing you can do for our students and for the people you work with is to stay home until you have not had a temperature for 24 hours. Taking a chance and coming to work may spread the flu to six others; those six will each spread it to six others, and so on.

I appreciate that many employees come to work when they are 'almost sick' or 'almost well' because they are dedicated to their jobs and our students. However, in these trying times, I am asking that you show good judgment and restraint and stay home if you are ill.

*Dr. George Herring
September 28, 2009*

Flu prevention information

1. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** If face-to-face contact is unavoidable, maintaining a distance of six feet from each other helps.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue, or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
3. **Clean your hands often**, by washing with soap or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth**, since germs spread that way. Do not put your pen in your mouth!
5. **Strengthen your immune system** by getting enough sleep, exercising, managing your stress, drinking plenty of fluids and eating healthy foods.

Reporting absences: Using Survey Monkey to track influenza-like illnesses

In order to effectively assess the degree of illness with potential H1N1 flu on our campus, we are asking that both faculty (for student absences) and administrators (for employee absences) **complete a survey every Wednesday**, until the flu season has passed. It will give us a general idea of how many students/employees are off ill at any one time. The information is important in the event that the H1N1 illness has become so widespread that we have to consider closing the campus. We will share the numbers with Alameda County Public Health in determining the need for closure. **Please check your email on Wednesday mornings for a reminder and link to the survey.**

Faculty Alert regarding major absenteeism

All faculty should consider what steps they may need to take in case of major student and/or faculty absenteeism in the event of a pandemic emergency. Each faculty person has the right to conduct his/her class as they see fit.

Some suggestions that have arisen and are in the college pandemic policy are:

- 1) Re-examine withdrawal/incomplete policies so that they are flexible during a time of emergency
- 2) Enable telecommuting or mailing/faxing work
- 3) Establish electronic communications with all students
- 4) Develop options for waiving/delaying/or using "take-home" exams
- 5) Add to syllabi actions to take in the event of a pandemic
- 6) Instruct students about using email or phone to communicate with instructor for information as to class continuance and/or other class arrangements
- 7) Obtain specific college fax/phone number available for use with instructors/students in emergency
- 8) Forecast and allow for student absence during a pandemic due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures

What if students seem ill but refuse to go home?

As we are currently faced with a world-wide epidemic of the H1N1 flu, and it has already made an appearance on our campus, concern has been voiced about students or staff who refuse to go home when they are clearly exhibiting influenza-like symptoms. Because we have little immunity to this flu, and it can therefore spread rapidly and unabated, it may be necessary, under certain circumstances, to be firm when insisting that someone go home to prevent further spread of the disease.

For student illness, the Student Code of Conduct indicates that faculty and staff are within their rights to ask a student to leave campus for THAT DAY if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms. The Student Code of Conduct states that "...Disciplinary action may be imposed on a student for violation of college rules and regulations.... Misconduct that may result in disciplinary action includes but is not limited to, the following violations..." Item 12: "...willful disobedience or refusal to comply with directions of....college employees in the performance of their duties..."

Please use your best judgment and discretion when speaking with students about this sensitive issue. If you have any further questions, please call Patricia Dudley, Health Services Coordinator, at 748-2320.

Cleaning protocol for hard surfaces

(from the CDC) *Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk, for example, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.*

At College of Alameda, the COA Safety Committee and the Pandemic Task Force, in addition to other information regarding cleanliness, are recommending the following:

- 1) Encourage students to wash their hands before using public computer keyboards and mice. Cover mouth and noses if coughing or sneezing.
- 2) Encourage students to use their personal computers instead of computers in the lab.
- 3) Keyboards may be cleaned with sanitizer cloths before each use – it is not necessary to wash both before and after. Follow label directions carefully. <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-a-product-list.pdf>
- 4) Use sanitizer cloths that are virucidal (not just bactericidal) and effective against Influenza A (read the label). Do not mix disinfectant and cleaners unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia clearers) can be harmful, resulting in serious injury or death.
- 5) Other common items that may spread disease are door-knobs, faucets, phones, remote controls, and other hand-held equipment.

Are masks necessary?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that people who are ill wear a mask when in a public setting, if available and tolerable, or use a tissue to cover cough/sneeze. People who are well do not need to wear a mask. It is best to stay at least six feet away from an infected person.

People with the following conditions may choose to wear a mask to prevent infection with H1N1 in a crowded setting: children younger than 5 years old; persons aged 65 years or older; children and adolescents (younger than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at

risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection; pregnant women; adults and children who have asthma, chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders such as diabetes; adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV); residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

For more information, see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm>.

Self screening for flu:

If you're not sure whether you have the flu, take this short self-assessment:

<http://healthcenter.mwsu.edu/flu-page/>

Is it a cold or the flu?

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, High (102° -104°); Lasts 3-4 Days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual, Often Severe
Fatigue, Weakness	Quite Mild	Can Last Up To 2-3 Weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Early And Prominent
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort, Cough	Mild To Moderate, Hacking Cough	Common; Can Become Severe
Complications	Sinus Congestion or Earache	Bronchitis, Pneumonia; Can Be Life-Threatening
Prevention	None	Annual Vaccination; Antiviral Medicines – See Your Doctor
Treatment	Treatment of Symptoms, Only Temporary Relief	Antiviral Medicines – See Your Doctor

Recognizing flu symptoms (seasonal versus H1N1)

The symptoms of both the H1N1 novel flu and seasonal flu are similar. They usually *come on suddenly* and may include:

1. Fever above 100°F, or signs of a fever (flushed and warm skin, sweats, chills)
2. Cough, particularly one that is new
3. Sore throat
4. Headache, often severe
5. Muscle aches, fatigue
6. Runny nose or stuffy nose
7. Chills
8. Possible nausea and diarrhea

What to do if you have influenza-like symptoms:

- At the first signs of illness, isolate yourself at home; do not come to classes or work. If you are at the college when you become ill, go home immediately.
- Home self care for this illness includes bed rest and taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or others) for headache, fever, and body aches. Monitor your fever with a thermometer. Drink clear fluids throughout the day.
- If you develop severe symptoms, or if you are a person in one of the high-risk groups for complications from the flu, call your personal health-care provider immediately (or Health Services M-F at 748-2320) and ask for a phone consultation regarding a flu-like illness.
- Communicate with your instructors and/or work supervisors as soon as possible to let them know about your illness. Students should check their syllabi for attendance and make-up policies and discuss with their instructors what options may exist to make up missed work during an anticipated absence.
- Stay home per the guidelines issued by the CDC and Public Health Department as follows:
 - Those experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay at home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
 - If you attend classes or work in a health-care setting, you should stay home for at least 7 days after the onset of flu symptoms or until 24 hours after symptoms subside, whichever is longer.
- Medical clearances to return to classes or work by health-care providers are NOT being recommended. If you have been exposed to a person with an influenza-like illness, but are not sick, you can attend classes or work (isolation is not being recommended at this time).

How severe is illness associated with 2009 H1N1 flu virus? (from the CDC)

Illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. While most people who have been sick have recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred.

In seasonal flu, certain people are at “high risk” of serious complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. About 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with this 2009 H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions previously recognized as placing people at “high risk” of serious seasonal flu-related complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease.

Are there medicines to treat 2009 H1N1 infection?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with 2009 H1N1 flu virus. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. During the current pandemic, the priority use for [influenza antiviral drugs](#) is to treat severe influenza illness (for example hospitalized patients) and people who are sick who have a condition that places them at high risk for serious flu-related complications.

Get a flu shot

Sutter Visiting Nurses Association cancelled the **seasonal flu shot** clinic that had been scheduled for October 13, 2009. They have cancelled 75% of their community flu clinics due to lack of vaccine material. To obtain a seasonal flu shot, you should contact your health care provider, or check for a clinic near you: <http://flucliniclocator.org/>.

VNA is still planning on having a flu shot clinic for the **H1N1 (Swine) flu** at our campus. At this time, they have not scheduled a date with us, but I will let you know as soon as it is planned.

Who should get a seasonal flu shot? (<http://www.cdc.gov/FLU/protect/keyfacts.htm>)

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting seasonal flu can get a seasonal influenza vaccine. However, it is recommended by ACIP that certain people should get vaccinated each year. They are either people who are at high risk of having serious seasonal flu-related complications or people who live with or care for those at high risk for serious seasonal flu-related complications. During flu seasons when vaccine supplies are limited or delayed, ACIP makes recommendations regarding priority groups for vaccination.

People who should get the seasonal vaccine each year are:

1. Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday
2. Pregnant women
3. People 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - a. Health care workers
 - b. Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - c. Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Who should get an H1N1 (Swine) flu shot? (<http://www.acphd.org/h1n1/index.htm>)

Although the guidelines are changing constantly, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency stated on September 23, 2009 that those listed below fall into three priority groups. Vaccinations will be given as the supply of vaccine allows.

Priority 1 (October-March)

- Pregnant women
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants ages less than 6 months (e.g. parents, siblings, and childcare providers)
- Health-care and emergency medical services personnel who have direct contact with patients or infectious material
- Children aged 6 months to 4 years
- Children and adolescents aged 5 to 18 years who have chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Priority 2 (November-March)

- All other health-care and emergency medical services personnel
- All other persons aged 6 months to 24 years
- Persons aged 25 to 64 years who have chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Priority 3 (December-March)

- All other persons aged 25 and older
- Anyone else wanting protection from H1N1 (Swine) flu

Stay informed

- A. Campus Presentation October 6, 2009, 12:320 -1:30 Student Lounge, F-Building
- B. Computer screens in labs
- C. Pandemic Information: <http://pandemicflu.gov/>
- D. Alameda County Information: <http://www.acphd.org/h1n1/index.htm>
- E. Flu Clinic Locator: <http://flucliniclocator.org/>.
- F. Community College Times: <http://www.communitycollegetimes.com/article.cfm?ArticleId=2115>
- G. Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- H. Disaster Resistant California Community Colleges: <http://emergency.cccco.edu/>
- I. YouTube Video (this Video is linked on the COA Home Page):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI0f1bzlhcg>
- J. California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Information supplied by College of Alameda Health Services Coordinator, Dr. Patricia Dudley.