

FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY

SAFETY BULLETIN - H1N1 INFLUENZA

The possibility exists that our campus community or the surrounding community may experience cases of H1N1 influenza. Given this possibility, members of the FMU community are encouraged to be mindful of the symptoms of influenza and practice good health habits to prevent the spread of the disease.

Each member of the campus community has a personal responsibility to take measures that will minimize their exposure to any influenza virus, including H1N1. The campus community is also encouraged to take precautions in the event that they or someone close to them contracts the flu.

Symptoms for H1N1 Influenza include: fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny nose, chills, and fatigue. Some also experience diarrhea and vomiting. A red flag is a fever of 101 or higher that does not respond to Tylenol or other fever reducing agents within one hour. If you experience that condition, you should contact your medical health care provider.

Francis Marion University is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the entire campus community. For more information about Student Health Services, please call 843-661-1844

The following suggestions are in accordance with the Center for Disease Control for Institutions of Higher Education and is based the interim guidelines designed to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus in our campus community.

1. At this time, CDC does not currently recommend that institutions cancel their classes or other large gatherings.
2. If confirmed cases of H1N1 virus infection or a large number of cases of influenza-like illness [i.e. fever with either cough or sore throat] occurs among students, faculty, or staff in the community, FMU officials will consult with state and local health officials regarding an appropriate response.
3. Those with flu-like illness should stay away from classes and limit interactions with other people (called "self-isolation"), except to seek medical care, for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Some people with influenza will not have fever; therefore, absence of fever does not mean absence of infection. They should stay away from others during this time period even if they are taking antiviral drugs for treatment of the flu. (For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm> .)
4. If possible, residential students with flu-like illness who live relatively close to the campus should return to their home to keep from making others sick. These students should be instructed to do so in a way that limits contact with others as much as possible. For example, travel by private car or taxi would be preferable over use of public transportation.
5. Non-residential students, faculty, and staff with flu-like illness should be asked to self-isolate at home or at a friend's or family member's home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
6. If persons with influenza-like illness must leave their home or residence hall room, they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing - or cough into their arm. A surgical loose fitting mask can be helpful for persons who have access to these, but a tissue or other covering is appropriate as well.
7. Roommates, household members, or those caring for an ill person should follow the CDC guidelines; visit http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm

H1N1 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What should I do if I think I have the flu?

Stay home and stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Take a fever medication for temperatures greater than 100 °F, 37.8 ° C. Follow the directions accompanying the medication. If you think you might need assistance, call your health provider for further guidance.

Is there anything I can do to prevent getting H1N1?

Many things reduce risk of infection. According to the Centers for Disease Control there are several things you can do to stay healthy, including: Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. By staying home you will help prevent others from catching your illness. When coughing or sneezing cover your mouth and nose and sneeze into your elbow rather than into your hand. If a tissue is used throw it in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Practice other good health habits; get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Can I be vaccinated against H1N1?

A vaccine for H1N1 is under development. Most college students would become eligible for such a vaccine when it becomes available. If all goes well, the vaccine may arrive in late fall, so it is important to have plans to address potential infection before vaccine supplies arrive.

Who's at risk for H1N1?

Everyone is potentially at risk. However, it appears that young people are more easily infected by H1N1 than those who were born before 1957. Persons who are pregnant, have young children, or who provide care to young children are considered to be at greatest risk, as are individuals with chronic medical conditions, including asthma. At this time Novel H1N1 seems not to be all that dangerous compared to seasonal influenza. This might change with time so the strain is being closely monitored by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Why has the Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued new recommendations regarding how to respond to it?

Most people who contract Novel H1N1 will experience the same mild to moderate symptoms that occur with seasonal influenza. However, a much larger percentage of people may become ill from Novel H1N1 flu than from seasonal influenza. A large number of people home with the flu is likely to cause disruptions in education and commerce. The CDC recommendations are designed to reduce the number of people who become ill before they have the opportunity to be vaccinated.