



Seasonal and H1N1 Flu:

A guide for MSOE students, faculty and staff

www.msoe.edu/health
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

What is seasonal flu?

The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year. There are many different flu viruses and sometimes a new flu virus emerges to make people sick.

What is H1N1 flu?

H1N1 flu is a new and very different influenza virus that is spreading worldwide among people. This new virus was called “swine flu” at first because it has pieces of flu viruses found in pigs in the past. However, H1N1 virus has not been detected in pigs in the U.S.

Influenza is unpredictable, but scientists believe that H1N1 virus will cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the U.S. over the coming months. This flu season, the new virus may cause a lot more people to get sick than during a regular flu season. It also may cause more hospital stays and deaths than seasonal flu.

How serious is the flu?

The flu can be very serious, especially for younger children and persons of any age who have one or more chronic medical conditions. These conditions include asthma or other lung problems, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems and neurological and neuromuscular disorders. These conditions can result in more severe illness from influenza, including H1N1 virus.

How does flu spread?

Both H1N1 flu and seasonal flu are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People also may get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their nose or mouth.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of seasonal flu and H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea.

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

People infected with seasonal and H1N1 flu may infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with H1N1 flu.

Protect Yourself

How can I protect myself against flu viruses?

Everyone should get the seasonal flu vaccine. Seasonal flu shots will be given on Oct. 19, 20 and 29 at MSOE to protect against seasonal flu viruses. Take everyday steps to prevent the spread of flu, including:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, 60% alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Keep from having close contact (about 6 feet) with sick people.
- Keep surfaces like bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and kitchen counters clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by sick persons in your household.

Is there a vaccine to protect against H1N1 flu?

A vaccine is being produced and will be available in the coming months as an option for the prevention of the H1N1 flu. A vaccine against seasonal flu is available each fall and winter. More information about the new H1N1 flu vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine is available on the CDC Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

Is there medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs can treat both seasonal flu and H1N1 flu. These drugs can make people feel better and get better sooner. But they need to be prescribed by a doctor and they work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. The priority use for these drugs is to treat people who are seriously ill or who have a medical condition that puts them at high risk of serious flu complications.

If you are sick

What can I do if I am sick?

If you have a fever and other flu-like symptoms call MSOE Health Services at (414) 277-7590 to report symptoms and receive guidance. After business hours, you can call My NurseLine at (866) 796-1847.

If you have a medical condition like asthma, diabetes or neurological problems and develop flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, call your doctor or get medical attention. Those with chronic medical conditions (like asthma or diabetes) may be at higher risk of complications from influenza infection, including H1N1 flu. Talk to MSOE Health Services or a medical provider early if you are worried.

What if I am very sick?

Even if you have always been healthy or had the flu before, you can still get a severe case of flu. If you have the following symptoms, you need to seek further medical assessment:

- Fast breathing, shortness of breath or chest pain
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Improvement of flu-like symptoms, followed by return of fever or worse cough
- Other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes or asthma) and development of flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough

Can I go to class if I have a fever and flu-like symptoms?

No. You should stay at home or in your residence hall room until you are without a fever for 24 hours (not using fever-reducing medicine).

When can I go back to classes or other campus activities after having the flu?

Stay home from classes for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without having taken a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F or 37.8°C, or higher.