

Subject: Columbia University's H1N1 Update

Dear Student:

We are looking forward to your arrival on campus and an exciting school year. As we prepare for the start of the fall term, Columbia wants to share some important information about staying healthy during flu and cold season.

As you may know, cases of swine Influenza A (H1N1) are still being reported nationally as well as in the New York City area. Most of these cases have been reported as mild. Columbia's experts continue to closely monitor the spread of H1N1 on the international, national and local levels, and to implement plans to protect your health during your time as a student.

Since H1N1 first emerged in the spring, Student Affairs, Housing and Dining Services, and Health Services have collaborated on ways to educate students and keep you healthy. One of the most important measures you can take to protect yourself and your classmates is to practice preventive hygiene to limit the potential spread of disease.

To help with this, educational fliers are posted throughout campus and in the residence halls, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap dispensers are provided in public gathering places such as dining areas, computer labs and customer service desks.

To provide you with the latest information and help answer your questions about flu and H1N1, the University is also regularly updating the Preparedness website at

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/studentervices/preparedness>. We encourage you to use this website as a central resource for information, and for frequent updates on ways to stay healthy this year.

Hygiene is the foremost protective measure everyone can take, but the most effective way to protect against seasonal flu is to get a vaccine. As we do each year, Health Services will provide seasonal flu vaccines at no cost to the Columbia community during the fall.

Information about how to get your free flu shot will be widely distributed on campus in September.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that a separate vaccine for the H1N1 virus is under development and could be available later this fall. As soon as we have information outlining the national distribution guidelines for the H1N1 vaccine, we will immediately share that information with the entire student body.

During the school year, if you have influenza-like illness, such as persistent fever combined with muscle aches or fatigue, please remember it is important for you to avoid attending classes and public activities until you are well again. In fact, if your family lives within commuting distance, it is best for you to recuperate at home. If you stay on campus, you should remain in your residence hall room, and Housing and Dining can help provide services while you recover. In either case, the CDC recommends that you remain in your residence for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever. (Note: It is most accurate to check your temperature after you have discontinued the use of Tylenol or Motrin.)

If you become ill during the school year, please contact:

Health Services at Columbia, 212-854-2284, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

A nurse will be available to speak with you and provide advice on how to seek appropriate care, and also advise you when you are well enough to resume participation in normal academic and campus activities. In addition, the Health Services staff can provide you with a number to call in Housing and Dining to ask about other services you might need while you are ill. As always, we encourage you to maintain strong communication with your family about your personal health.

If you are too ill to attend classes, you should also immediately contact your Advising Dean to make alternate arrangements for missed coursework. CC and SEAS students can reach their Advising Dean in the Center for Student Advising at 212-854-6378. GS students can reach their Advising Dean in the Dean of Students Office at 212-854-2881.

Below are tips for preventing the flu:

1. Take the seasonal influenza vaccine when it becomes available.
2. Use good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
3. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or the elbow of your arm when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, since germs may spread that way.
5. Avoid close contact with others who are ill. Avoid holding, hugging or kissing anyone who has a cold or the flu.
6. If you become sick, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

For more influenza prevention tips, please visit:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/student-services/preparedness>.

We wish you a safe and healthy school year.

Sincerely,

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