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Home Isolation Guidelines If You Have an Influenza-like Illness

If you have been diagnosed with either influenza or an influenza-like illness, you can easily spread the infections to others when you cough or sneeze, or touch common surfaces when virus is on your hands. Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub are essential in stopping the spread of influenza!

During the period that you have symptoms, especially fever, it is possible for you to transmit this virus to those who have close contact with you. To help prevent transmission of influenza virus to your close contacts, the **CDC and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene request that you stay home until at least 24 hours after your symptoms have resolved, and your temperature is under 100 degrees without the use of fever reducing medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. [If you are a clinical student you will need to have clearance from the SHS to return to your clinical setting. Clearance will be provided when your temperature has been less than 100 degrees for 24 hours.]**

During that time, please follow these guidelines:

- Stay at home until at least 24 hours after your fever is less than 100 degrees with out feverreducing medications. If your family lives within commuting distance, it may be best for you to recuperate at home if you can get there without using public transportation. Please avoid taking public transportation while you are ill.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- 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. Wash your hands after disposing of the tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Clean things that are touched often such as door or refrigerator handles, computer keyboard/mouse, phone and water faucets with disinfectant wipes.
- Avoid close contact with others who are ill. Avoid holding, hugging or kissing anyone who has a cold or the flu.
- If you live in a shared suite, stay in your room as much as possible.
- When close contact with other people in the home is unavoidable, the sick person should wear a surgical mask to help prevent the spread of the virus. Surgical masks can be purchased in a pharmacy, medical supply or hardware store, and are also available from Student Health Service. Wash your hands after putting on or taking off a mask.
- Drink plenty of fluids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Please keep in mind that many multi-symptom cold medications already contain acetaminophen.
- Please call the Student Health Service at **212-342-3951** to speak with a nurse if your symptoms get worse, or if you develop any difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, increasing fever, sudden dizziness, confusion, or severe or persistent vomiting.

Information for close contacts of someone with an influenza-like illness is on the back of this page.

Information for Close Contacts of Someone with an Influenza-Like Illness

- Close contacts should monitor themselves closely for the development of illness. If they get a mild illness with fever and cough, they should stay home and take the same precautions listed above.
- Most people who live with or have close contact with people with influenza H1N1 virus do NOT need to take any anti-viral medication to prevent illness. If one of your close contacts or roommates has concerns about their own health or is at risk for complications of the flu due to an underlying medical condition, **including pregnancy**, and they are a CUMC student enrolled in the Student Health Service, please have them call **212-342-3951** to speak with a nurse. If they are not a Columbia student or enrolled in the SHS, advise them to call their own doctor for further advice.
- Anti-viral medications may be recommended for people with certain underlying medical conditions, **especially pregnancy**. All who become ill should rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Please keep in mind that many multi-symptom cold medications already contain acetaminophen.
- Call the Student Health Service at **212-342-3951** to speak with a nurse if you require further information or develop severe flu symptoms, including difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, increasing fever, sudden dizziness, confusion, or severe or persistent vomiting. If you are not a CUMC student enrolled in the SHS, contact your own physician.

For more information, please copy and paste the following links into your web browser:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/studentservices/preparedness/>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cd/cd-h1n1flu-homeisolation-new.pdf>

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

Please call 212-305-3400 if you have any questions about the contents of this email.

Student Health Service, Columbia University Medical Center