

H1N1 FACT SHEET FOR UTSA STUDENTS

Late last spring, we were introduced to the H1N1 flu virus. At first it was termed “swine flu,” then “North American flu,” before finally settling on the moniker “H1N1 flu.” As the season progresses, we begin to see more stories in the media concerning this threat and its potential severity and impact. It is important for our community to understand protective actions that we as individuals can take, the signs and symptoms of the virus, and actions to take if infected.

UTSA relies on the advice of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and information provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services and the City of San Antonio’s Metro Health office for disease prevention and response information. We already have policies in place to address most of the issues that will result from an outbreak of H1N1 in the local area.

What are the H1N1 signs and symptoms?

- Fever 100° F. or higher, with a median temperature of 102° F., and either
 - Sore throat or
 - Cough
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)

According to the CDC, what groups are at a higher risk of being impacted by H1N1?

- All people ages 6 months-24 years
- Pregnant women
- Caregiver of children younger than 6 months.
- Health care providers, Target First Responders
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- Those aged 25-64 with chronic respiratory ailments, asthma, neurological disorders, diabetes and immunodeficiency

What can I do to stay healthy?

- Stay informed. Reading this article is an excellent first step, but don’t stop there. Go to informational Web sites such as www.cdc.gov, www.flu.gov or texasflu.org to stay up to date on this evolving situation.
- Influenza is spread person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by infected people, so:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue 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. Alcohol-based hands cleaners also are effective.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - Minimize your time with other people who are showing flu-like symptoms.
- Get vaccinated. Get the seasonal flu vaccination, as well as the H1N1 vaccination (with booster) when it becomes available. These are different vaccines and one vaccine will not protect you against the other kind of flu.

- Discuss with your instructors what accommodations might be required in the event of a departmental outbreak.

What should I do if I get sick?

- If necessary, seek medical attention.
- If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms the CDC recommends staying home and avoiding contact with other people.
- CDC recommends staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Staying away means that you should not leave except to seek medical care. Avoid normal activities including work, school, travel, shopping, social events and public gatherings.
- If you have chronic illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed. Underlying medical conditions that often require special attention for avoiding severe complications with flu include asthma and diabetes. If you are living with a chronic disease, check with your doctor about whether flu should be a more serious concern for you.

What should I expect when I see a doctor?

Every physician is different, so expect that the advice from your physician may deviate from the following information. However, this should serve to help prepare you for a visit to your physician during this flu season.

- Your physician may have special plans for dealing with those who present with flu-like symptoms. For example, he or she may ask that you put on a mask while waiting to be seen or move you into another waiting area to reduce the chances of spreading the flu.
- Your physician will most certainly perform an initial evaluation that will likely include the following: gathering of history of your past and current illnesses to include current symptoms, taking your vital signs and conducting an examination.
- Based on the results, your physician may decide to perform additional testing. The additional testing, if done, will determine treatment (i.e., antibiotics or antivirals) or your physician may decide that the best course of action would be using some type of over-the-counter medication that might be helpful and appropriate for you while you are recovering from your illness.
- Please be clear, based on your physician's examination and experience. Your condition may not warrant an antibiotic or antiviral.
- If concerned about your physician's recommendations, ask questions and allow your physician to assist you in understanding your illness and his or her recommended individualized treatment plan for you.

How can I fulfill my class commitment to UTSA if I am affected by flu?

- Faculty have been encouraged to allow students to make up any assignments that may be missed due to an illness, especially a contagious illness such as the regular or H1N1 flu.
- Discuss this with your instructors before any illness to ensure a mutual understanding of expectations and individual rules.

Important links:

- CDC H1N1 Web site
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- Texas Dept of State Health Services H1N1 Web site
www.texasflu.org
- San Antonio Metro Health H1N1 Info Web site
<http://www.sanantonio.gov/health/H1N1.html>
- UTSA H1N1 Web site
<http://www.utsa.edu/today/2009/08/swineflu4.cfm>

By understanding this evolving situation and remaining up to date, we are better able to distinguish fact from fiction. Through practicing protective actions, recognizing the signs and symptoms of this virus, and knowing the actions to take if infected, we can react as a community to keep ourselves safe and lessen the impact of H1N1.

(September 2009)