

H1N1 Flu Virus Information

This information has been compiled after reviewing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) information along with consulting with the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment (EPCDHE).

Overview

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

The most important information that each individual needs to be aware of is how to best prevent the spread of this illness and how to deal with the onset of influenza like illness should it occur.

What Can You Do

Preventing the spread of H1N1 is of utmost importance as we start the school year.

Following these simple recommendations will help ensure your health, as well as the health of those around you.

The simplest thing that you can do is wash your hands on a regular basis. If you don't have access to water there are hand sanitizer stations placed in high traffic areas around campus. It is also important to disinfect your work area on a regular basis. The bookstore sells sanitizing wipes that can be used on desks, keyboards, etc. at a reasonable cost. If you have cloth furniture in your area you may also want to consider using a spray disinfectant.

It is also important to make sure that you cough or sneeze into the sleeve of your arm versus your hands. If you do cough or sneeze on your hands or into a tissue, be sure to wash your hands immediately after.

Sharing drinks, utensils, etc. is not recommended as someone may be infectious even before the onset of symptoms so be proactive and don't share items with others.

Finally, if you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. **Unless necessary for medical care, you should stay home and minimize contact with others, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, without the use of fever reducing medications.** If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, and cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue and then wash your hands. In general, you should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness, especially people at increased risk of severe illness from influenza. Those at increased risk of having a more serious response to H1N1 are infants under 6 months, people with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and chronic ailments that lower

their immune system. As with seasonal flu, people may be contagious for one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick.

Key points for you to pay attention to are:

1. Understand that students ill with flu like symptoms should remain out of the classroom until their fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. It is not recommended that they seek medical attention unless they have a severe case or an underlying health condition. It is unlikely that they will bring in excuses from a medical provider when they return. You should ask ill students to contact the Student Health Center at 255-4444 so that we can track the progression of a potential outbreak.
2. For Staff: Following are some guidelines to assist you. Please refer any questions regarding personnel procedures to Cindy Corwin in the Human Resources Office at 255-3696.
 - a. Supervisors must send employees home from work if they show flu-like symptoms and it is important that you stay home for the recommended length of time. Employees who have exhausted their sick leave should use compensatory time (if accrued) or annual leave. Employees who have exhausted all leave should be granted leave without pay.
 - b. If a family member demonstrates flu-like symptoms, you are encouraged to stay home to care for them. Use of leave as outlined above would apply in these cases.
 - c. The CDC has recommended that employees NOT be required to confirm their flu-like symptoms with medical documentation. While leave policies may require a physician's statement in some cases, it is typically not required for flu-related absences; however, return to work statements may be required on a case-by-case basis. Please note that for all other (i.e., not flu) medical conditions lasting longer than three days medical documentation is required.
 - d. Supervisors should develop cross-training plans now for work coverage and work with others in your area to discuss how job duties will be covered in an employee's absence. Supervisors of PESA staff are encouraged to consider alternative work locations if necessary.
 - e. Be sure to notify your immediate supervisor of your illness. Supervisors are required to report the absence to Human Resources. Please use the main extension (X3372) to report flu-like absences. This will help us track the spread of this infection. -
3. Wash your hands frequently and use the hand sanitizer placed around campus on a regular basis.
4. Get your seasonal flu vaccine, as well as the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available sometime in October or November.

I am happy to come and speak with any department or class on campus that would like to get more information about H1N1 and how to prepare for this flu season. Being as prepared as possible will help minimize the amount of people that are missing from

classes and work at a given time. The prediction is that up to 40% of a work population could be out this flu season making it imperative that everyone do their part to be proactive with this virus. Please contact me at 255-4444 if you have any further questions.