

## **Influenza (flu) H1N1 preparedness at Marygrove College**

Public health officials are predicting an increase in cases of H1N1 flu (formerly swine flu) this year, and Marygrove College has been working diligently throughout the summer to prepare to meet this potential challenge. As the start of the new academic year approaches, we want to share some important information with you about this situation.

### **Preventative Measures**

1. The College Crisis Management Team continues to monitor and implement best practices with regard to health issues. This team will continue to recommend action steps as needed.
2. As the fall semester opened, an educational campaign began with the posting of “Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes” and “Wash Your Hands” signs around campus.
3. The Student Health Services staff ordered seasonal flu vaccines in anticipation of offering these vaccines to the College community in mid- to late October. At this time, the vaccine for the H1N1 influenza virus is being developed. To monitor progress, see the [CDC Web site](#).

Marygrove College is taking the warnings of public health officials seriously, and we encourage you to do so as well. We will do our best to keep all members of our community informed as information becomes available.

### **Personal Responsibility to Promote Good Health**

Marygrove College community members are urged to continuously practice good health and hygiene habits.

- Follow good cough and sneeze etiquette by coughing or sneezing into a tissue (or if a tissue is unavailable, to cover your mouth with your upper arm).
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer especially if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home except to seek medical attention when you have flu-like symptoms.

All members of Marygrove College community should exercise personal responsibility, including eating right, getting enough sleep, not sharing utensils, and not drinking out of the same container with others.

## **1. What's the flu? And what's the difference between seasonal flu and H1N1 (swine) flu??**

Influenza ("flu") is the name given to **contagious respiratory illnesses** caused by a variety of influenza viruses. Flu can cause mild to severe illness, even death. Every year in the United States, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes. Some people, such as older individuals, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at higher risk for serious flu complications.

**Seasonal influenza** is caused by viruses that are responsible for global seasonal flu epidemics each year. In the U.S., this influenza is experienced during the winter months primarily. Most people have some immunity to seasonal flu. A vaccine is available annually.

**H1N1** (Also known as novel H1N1 or swine flu) is a new influenza virus that was first detected in the U.S. in April 2009 and continues to spread around the world. It more commonly affects children and young adults. The virus causes relatively mild illness in most of those infected, but because it is new, most people have no immunity against it. As a result many more people could get the flu this year.

### **How will you know if you have the flu?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines flu-like illness this way: A fever of 100.4F or greater, plus a cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea. Fever is a key factor.

### **Where do you go to get help if you are sick with the flu on campus?**

You may not need to see a physician if your symptoms are mild. . Simply follow self-isolation procedures, drink adequate fluids and use fever lowering medications as needed. When in doubt, please contact your family physician. The majority of people who become ill are experiencing mild to moderate cases of the flu and are recovering fully in a week or less, without any medical intervention.

The best way to stay healthy is to wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, and keep your hands away from your face.

- Students through age 24 will be among the first to be offered the opportunity to get the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it is available later this fall. Contact your primary care physician or county health department for information.
- Additional information on H1N1 can be obtained from the following websites:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/>

## How do I take care of myself or someone else if we have flu symptoms?

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids including juice and water
  - Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Eat lightly
  - chicken soup, toast, crackers, oatmeal applesauce, anything tolerated without nausea
- Take over the counter medication to relieve symptoms.
  - Tylenol (acetaminophen), Motrin (ibuprofen), to relieve fever, headache and body aches
  - Cough Syrup or lozenges to decrease cough
  - Nasal Decongestant
- Do not smoke

## When should I seek medical attention?

You should see a doctor or other health care provider if:

- You have a fever that lasts more than 3-5 days
- You have difficulty breathing or are having chest pain
- You experience seizures, confusion, excessive sleepiness
- You have color changes of your skin, especially in your hands or around your mouth
- You have vomiting or diarrhea that continues over 24-48 hours.

For information on the novel flu strain H1N1 go to [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu).

## Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [World Health Organization](http://www.who.int)
- [Official U.S. Government Web site for information on H1N1](http://www.hhs.gov)
- [Michigan Department of Community Health](http://www.michigan.gov)
- [Wayne County Health Department](http://www.waynecounty.com)