

Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus Update 8/09

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Novel H1N1 pandemic flu is widespread throughout the world. The majority of cases are mild and the H1N1 virus appears no more virulent or severe than most seasonal flus. This strain is more frequent in children and young adults because those who are younger than 50 years of age have not had contact with a similar type of this virus.

Cases of Novel H1N1 have already appeared on college campuses. We expect to see more cases this fall, consistent with what is happening in public communities. We strongly encourage all members of the Siena community to take the standard precautions adopted during the flu season and to play an active role in our public health prevention efforts.

What is the difference between cold and flu?

The common cold and the flu are both respiratory illnesses with similar symptoms. So how can we differentiate between the two? The main difference between the common cold virus and the flu virus is the severity of symptoms.

Signs & Symptoms	Seasonal FLU	Cold
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	Characteristic, high (above 101 F); lasting 3 to 4 days	Rare or low grade
Cough	Dry; can become severe	Hacking
Headache	Prominent	Rare
Myalgia (muscle aches and pains)	Usual; often severe	Slight
Tiredness and weakness	Can last up to 2 weeks	Very mild
Extreme exhaustion	Early and prominent	Never
Chest discomfort	Common	Mild to moderate
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Sometimes	Usual
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common

What are the symptoms of the H1N1 flu?

The symptoms of the H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of the seasonal flu. The symptoms usually starts suddenly and may include the following:

- fever (100 or greater)
- Chills
- Headache
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Fatigue
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting

How are viruses spread?

Flu viruses are spread from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze from an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited in the mouth or nose of people nearby. Flu viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or object, and then touches their own mouth or nose before washing their hands.

What can you do to protect yourself and prevent the spread of the Flu Virus?

1. Hand washing is the most effective means of preventing the spread of illness. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough and sneeze. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are also very effective.
2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw tissues in the trash after you use them.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
4. Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with ill persons.
5. Keep your room clean and disinfect commonly used surfaces.

What should you do if you get sick?

Cold viruses are treated with supportive measures for symptom control and resolve in 5- 7 days. CDC guidelines recommends that students, faculty and staff with flu- like illness should stay away from classes and limit interactions with other people, except to seek medical care.

If you are a student and have flu or flu-like symptoms, call Health Services at 783-2554. You can talk to one of the nursing staff or make an appointment. Call early in the morning for best availability.

If you are a faculty or staff member and have flu or flu-like symptoms, call your personal physician and contact your supervisor if you are going to be absent from work.

What vaccines are available for protection against the flu?

1. Seasonal Flu Vaccine will be available at the annual Flu Vaccine Clinic held on campus October 29th. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all students get vaccinated for the seasonal flu.
2. Novel H1N1 Vaccine is still being developed. Recent recommendations from CDC have placed individuals under age of 24 in the top priority for receiving the H1N1 vaccine. More information will be available in the upcoming weeks regarding how and when this vaccine will be given.

Additional Information can be found at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm