

Novel H1N1 flu Faculty Information Fall 2009

The information below is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Healthcare subgroup of UK's Pandemic Planning team, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Emergency Management.

1. Proper hand hygiene is the best way to combat illness, especially the flu. Encourage students to wash hands regularly and carry their own personal sized container of alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is especially true for teaching environments in which students come in contact with commonly used equipment (i.e., computer labs). Consider modeling this behavior by also carrying your own personal sized container of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Self-isolation of the sick is extremely beneficial in controlling the spread of any illness, especially the flu. The government reports healthy young adults are considered at high risk for contracting the Novel H1N1 virus. This includes a large majority of our University student population. Therefore, it is imperative that if a student is ill, he/she NOT attend class or any activities on campus. Please discuss your attendance/absenteeism policy with your class. Students should be clear on their responsibilities related to class attendance/learning. It should also be clear that we do NOT want ill students in class. If they must miss due to illness, it is their responsibility to notify you and make arrangements regarding missed instruction.
3. Although the young adult population is contracting the illness in greater numbers, it appears that they are experiencing milder symptoms and don't always require medical attention to recover. In order to avoid overcrowding doctor's offices and hospitals, the CDC recommends to schools to NOT require a doctor's excuse for Novel H1N1. Except for extreme cases (i.e., common exams) please consider this as well.
4. Utilize the Academic Alert Systems webform - found at www.uky.edu/UGS/alert/early_alert.html - to report unusual numbers (~10% or more) of class absences and/or anecdotal information (student communication stating they have the flu) to the Office of the Provost. This information is essential to the University as we continually assess the impact of Novel H1N1 on our campus
5. Encourage social distancing in class (when an option). The goal is to have at least 6 ft between each person. This might be achieved by having students stagger their seating arrangements (i.e., leaving an empty seat between).
6. Have a personal preparedness plan. Just as a large number of student absences affect learning, large numbers of instructor absences are also an issue. Please develop a personal preparedness plan. Consider a teaching "buddy" or substitute who could cover your class in the event you need to be out. Make plans for your family. Who will care for your children if schools and/or childcare facilities are closed? Will you need to be out to care for an ill family member?