

Dear UCM Campus Community,

Greetings from the University Health Center! We hope that you have had a relaxing and refreshing break and are looking forward to a great spring semester. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of influenza (flu) outbreaks across the United States are rising, so we want to provide you with information about the flu and preventative tips to consider. We hope that you will please take time to read the following information as you prepare for the spring semester. The information has been compiled from the CDC website (www.cdc.gov), which we encourage you to browse if you want to learn more about influenza.

What is influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.
- It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

What should I do if I get sick?

Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

If, however, you have symptoms of flu and are very sick or worried about your illness, faculty and staff contact your doctor and students contact the University Health Center at 660-543-4770. Our staff will be able to help you determine if you need to be seen and whether influenza testing and possible treatment are needed.

Do I need to go the emergency room if I am only a little sick?

No. The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room. If you go to the emergency room and you are not sick with the flu, you may catch it from people who do have it.

How does flu spread?

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose. Certain people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu (i.e bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, etc.). This includes older people, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and persons who live in facilities of close proximity like nursing homes.

How can I prevent getting the flu?

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, and if you have not received your flu shot for this year and would like to do so please contact the University Health Center. We have a limited supply of flu vaccine. Additionally, good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can also help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. We strongly encourage that you implement good health habits to help with the prevention of the flu.

Please also be aware that there is a gastrointestinal virus, the norovirus, going around causing vomiting and diarrhea that should be treated with the same precautions-stay home, stay hydrated, and use good hand washing at all times. Seek medical care if you cannot stay hydrated.

Thank you for reading this email and helping to keep the campus healthy!

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