

What Do I Do if I have Flu-like Symptoms?

This year seasonal influenza and the H1N1 influenza viruses are causing illness in the United States and countries around the world. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects that illnesses may continue for some time. As a result, you or people around you may become ill. If so, you need to recognize the symptoms and know what to do.

Influenza (flu) can cause symptoms that are similar to other respiratory viruses (such as the common cold). Many respiratory viruses, including influenza, can cause sore throat, runny nose, and cough. With flu, symptoms generally start abruptly and are usually accompanied by a fever over 100° F, and are often accompanied by body aches and fatigue.

Symptoms of Influenza (Flu)

The symptoms of flu virus include any or all of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100 degrees F or higher)
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Possibly Diarrhea and Vomiting

Treating Symptoms

Most healthy people will recover from the flu with rest, fluids, and, if needed, over-the-counter medicines for symptoms. Symptoms usually begin 1-4 days after you are exposed to the influenza virus. The worst symptoms generally occur in the first 2-4 days of illness. Usually symptoms will begin to improve after 2-4 days, though some symptoms, especially cough, congestion, and fatigue can persist for 1-3 weeks. People are generally contagious for the 1 day prior to 24 hours after fever is gone (without fever reducing medication).

Steps You Can Take To Treat Your Symptoms

- Stay home and avoid exertion. Let your body recover;
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially if you have fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Clear fluids such as water, Sprite, tea, broth, electrolyte drinks, etc. are recommended;
- Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed for fever, chills, body aches, or sore throat;
- Salt water gargles (¼ tsp. salt in 1 cup warm water) or throat lozenges can ease sore throat pain;
- Over-the-counter decongestant or cough medicines can be helpful for congestion and cough;
- It is VERY important that you self-isolate until you are free of fever (temperature under 100 ° F without the use of fever reducing medicines) for at least 24 hours. See “Protect Yourself, Your Family, and Your Community” below;

When to Seek Medical Attention

Contact your healthcare provider (by phone) for advice on managing your illness if you:

- Have flu symptoms, and have a condition that puts you at higher risk for serious illness from the flu (see below);
- If you are a caregiver or have close contact of an infant less than 6 months of age, or any high-risk person;
- Have prolonged symptoms (fever over 100° for more than 5 days, cough and congestion lasting more than 3 weeks or worsening after 1 week);
- Have signs of a complication from the flu (significant ear pain, sinus pain, chest pain, or shortness of breath, prolonged fatigue, inability to drink enough fluids);

Persons at Higher Risk for Severe Illness or Complications from the Flu

- Children less than 5 years old (especially under 2);
- Persons aged 65 years or older;
- Persons less than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy;
- Pregnant women;
- Adults and children who have chronic diseases of the
 - Lung (including asthma)
 - Heart (except high blood pressure)
 - Liver
 - Kidneys
 - Blood (including sickle-cell disease and chronic anemia)
 - Nervous system
 - Neuromuscular disorders, or
 - Metabolic disorders (including diabetes)
- Adults and children who have a suppressed immune system (including that caused by medications or by HIV infection);
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

Warning Signs

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care. Call the [Student Health Center](#) at (619) 260-4595 during regular clinic hours. If the Student Health Center is closed, seek care at a local [Urgent Care or ER](#), or contact the USD SHC on call provider via Public Safety at (619) 260-7777.

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Significant or persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Protect Yourself, Your Family, and Community

- If you are sick with a flu-like illness, **stay home, or in your dorm room, until you are free of fever (100°F or lower without the use of fever reducers) for at least 24 hours** except to seek medical care. Keep away from other people as much as possible; especially if they are high-risk for complications from the flu (see above).
- Try to avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with others while you are ill. Do not go to class, dining areas, or to the library. Avoid public spaces.
- Discourage visitors to your room while you are ill with the flu. All USD professors are aware of the self-isolation recommendation and will make arrangements for you to make up missed work.
- If you are sick and must enter a public or common space (such as the bathroom), wear facemask to help prevent spreading the virus to others.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Contact your RA or CD to arrange delivery of meals to your room while you are ill.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.