

Announcement to ALL UTMB Students Novel H1N1 Influenza A (Swine Flu)

Cases of N1H1 influenza, also known as swine influenza, have occurred in the United States since last spring and it is anticipated that many more cases will occur during the coming influenza season. For that reason, the U.S. is developing a preparedness plan to protect our citizens, and UTMB also has a plan to protect our patients, employees and students.

Everyone in the UTMB community needs to adopt good habits of cough etiquette and respiratory hygiene to protect themselves and others.

- **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.**
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You may also use an alcohol hand rub.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. That is one way the swine influenza is spread.**
- **Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **If you become ill while at school, go home.**
- **If you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for seven days or until 24 hours after your fever is gone, whichever is longer.**
- **Take the seasonal influenza vaccine in September and the swine influenza vaccine when it becomes available in October.**

Persons with certain underlying medical conditions are at greater risk from this virus:

- Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular, renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
- Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or HIV
- Pregnant women
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy

All persons, especially those with these underlying medical conditions, should practice good cough etiquette and other precautionary measures. It is very important that high risk individuals be immunized with both the seasonal influenza and swine influenza vaccines as soon as they become available. These people should seek immediate medical care if they develop a flu-like illness.

Students who are exposed to a patient, healthcare worker or another student who has swine flu will be placed on a contact list created by Healthcare Epidemiology. The list will be given to the student wellness center and the student will be contacted and offered antiviral prophylaxis.

Students experiencing flu-like symptoms should practice self-isolation and not go to classes or clinical rotations for seven days or until their fever has been gone for a 24-hour period without the use of fever-reducing medications, **whichever is longer**.

Flu-like symptoms include:

- **Fever (100°F or 37.8°C)**
- **Sore throat and/or cough**
- **Runny and/or stuffy nose**



Students experiencing influenza-like illness (ILI) should:



**Contact Student Wellness at
409-772-1215**

**Press 2 for Student Wellness, and then
Press 1 to talk with Staff.**

*Please CALL Student Wellness --
Do not come to Student Wellness before calling.*

Antiviral medications, if started within the first 48 hours of onset of symptoms are appropriate for some but not all persons with influenza-like illness. Student Wellness nurses can advise students about whether they should come into the clinic for a medical evaluation and/or how to care for themselves at home. Depending on circumstances, Student Wellness may provide special instructions for coming to the clinic, in order to minimize exposure of others. **Healthy people do not need to come in to be seen when they have the flu, and it is not advised to administer antiviral medications to this group.**

● **Please call Student Wellness immediately or report to the nearest emergency room if you have any of these Emergency Warning signs:**

- ➔ **Difficulty breathing**
- ➔ **Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen**
- ➔ **Sudden dizziness**
- ➔ **Confusion**
- ➔ **Severe persistent vomiting**
- ➔ **Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough (post-flu pneumonia)**

- Students doing clinical rotations or in a medical risk group should get the seasonal flu vaccine when it becomes available. Student Wellness will notify students when they begin their seasonal flu shot campaign, most likely mid-September. An email will be sent outlining when and where flu shots will be given.
- Students doing clinical rotations or in a medical risk group should get the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it is available on campus, which may be in early November. Student Wellness will send an email when the vaccine is available.
- Students should refer to www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu and the UTMB website www.utmbhealthcare.org/OPage.asp?PageID=OTH000167 for information on H1N1.

Consideration for Absences: All four schools have made a commitment to make considerations for students who are absent related to the flu. Please watch for a communication from your school related to this issue. Students MUST stay away from class/clinical for a minimum of 7 days if they develop flu/flu like symptoms.