Seasonal Flu Information

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It is spread by droplets of fluid—discharged by carriers who cough or sneeze—that are inhaled by the nose or mouth. The flu virus can also be transmitted via the nose or mouth after having physical contact with an affected surface or object.

The flu is contagious and, according to the CDC, most adults can infect others one day before symptoms develop and 5-7 days after becoming sick. The virus generally lasts a week.

Protections and Precautions:

The best protection against the flu virus is to get vaccinated via a flu shot, which is available through your primary health care provider, pharmacies at major drugstores, community clinic or BC Health Services.

An equally important protection is to wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap and water, and to avoid direct contact with infected individuals.

The CDC recommends that individuals take the following precautions to avoid the flu:

* Get a flu shot
* Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizers to prevent infection.
* Avoid those who are sick, if possible.
* Clean high touch surfaces with an anti-bacterial cleaner such as Clorox wipes.
* Practice cough etiquette by coughing into your sleeve or a tissue, and washing your hands immediately thereafter.

In the event of the flu, the CDC recommends the following guidelines:

* Stay home and rest in bed.
* Drink lots of fluids.
* Avoid entering dining halls, classrooms and the Rec Plex to prevent spreading the virus.
* Recruit a ”flu buddy” to help care for you by bringing you food from the dining halls.
* Treat symptoms such as fever with over-the-counter medications.

Contact University Health Services at 617-552-3225 if you have questions or concerns.
Ebola Update

The Ebola virus is a severe viral illness spread by direct contact with a sick person’s blood or body fluids. It cannot be spread (like the cold or seasonal flu) through air-borne pathogens or causal contact. To limit the spread of the illness, the CDC urges that all US residents avoid non-essential travel to the affected West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and New Guinea. Individuals travelling to these areas need to contact BC Health Services prior to their departure and return to campus.

Preventions:

The CDC offers the following tips to prevent transmission:

*If you have travelled to the affected area or been in contact with individuals who have, the CDC urges you to self-isolate and closely monitor your health condition for 21 days. You should seek medical advice promptly if you present the symptoms of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash or bleeding.

*At all times, avoid physical contact with infected individuals and, in particular, with a sick person’s blood or bodily fluids.

*Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Boston College will continue to monitor the outbreak of flu and Ebola through local, state and federal agencies. Updates will be posted on the Health Services website, as necessary.