

## GUIDELINES FOR SEASONAL FLU AND H1N1 VIRUS

Over the summer, Boston College administrators have met regularly to prepare for the coming flu season and to address concerns posed by the H1N1 virus. While medical experts agree that this virus so far poses no more of a threat than the seasonal flu with which we deal each winter, we have taken necessary precautions to ensure that we are prepared to address the issue. In the meantime, we encourage all BC students, faculty and staff to follow the recommendations of public health officials nationwide, which include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water or waterless hand sanitizers.
- Cover your nose/mouth with a tissue, sleeve or elbow when you cough or sneeze. Throw away used tissues.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol based hand gel.
- Regularly clean shared phone receivers, keyboards, remote controls, office equipment and door knobs.
- Refrain from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.
- Get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and smoking.
- Finally, if you think you are ill with the symptoms of influenza, avoid close contact with others as much as possible. Seek medical care.

In accordance with recommendations issued by the federal government and the Centers for Disease Control on August 20, students with the flu should isolate themselves in their dorm rooms or apartments until 24 hours after their fever subsides, letting their roommates bring them their meals. Students with flu symptoms in close quarters should consider wearing surgical masks (available at the BC Health Services) as a courtesy.

Students whose preexisting medical conditions put them at a higher risk for severe cases of the flu should make an appointment with BC Health Services or visit their own health provider for the seasonal flu vaccine, the pneumonia vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine when they become available.

Each year, Boston College, like all colleges and universities nationwide, deals with outbreaks of the flu on campus. As stated above, the N1H1 influenza so far poses is no greater a threat than the seasonal outbreaks that we experience each flu season. Where this flu strain has been reported on colleges this year, most cases have been mild. When students do come down with the flu, we will respond to their needs as we have in the past. In the meantime, students should simply take precautions by following the guidelines stated above to help prevent the flu's spread, and then seek their own doctor's advice on getting flu vaccinations, which we will be offering on campus when they become available in the fall.

We hope this information will be useful in helping to prepare you for the fall semester, and in helping to ease any unfounded concerns. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call BC Health Services at **617-552-3225** or visit our website at [www.bc.edu/healthservices](http://www.bc.edu/healthservices)

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