

## Martin Luther College – proactive influenza policies

School started this year with a more challenging than normal flu season. Seasonal flu arrived a bit earlier than usual on MLC's campus and Minnesota has a significant incidence of documented cases of H1N1 infection. How should we respond?

MLC's Safety Committee and its Pandemic Subcommittee have been working to implement the influenza guidelines provided to colleges and universities by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Those guidelines are outlined below:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder—not into your hands.
3. **Stay home or at your place of residence (dorm room) if you are sick** for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Staying away from others while sick can prevent others from getting sick too. As a roommate, friend, or family member to check up on you and to bring you food and supplies if needed.
4. **Talk to your health care provider** to find out if you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu and/or 2009 H1N1 flu. Information about 2009 H1N1 flu vaccination can be found at: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination) Information about seasonal flu vaccine can be found at: [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm)

How are we, here at MLC, putting these guidelines into practice? Here's what we've been doing:

- Our nurse and safety director are communicating influenza information (like that listed above) to the entire campus family on a regular basis.
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer stations have been placed all over campus and containers of sanitizing wipes can be found in every classroom.
- We are asking those students with ILI to remain in their dorm rooms (isolation) until fever has subsided. To help with this, the dorm supervisors and RAs have organized meal delivery for those who are in isolation. We are also encouraging those students who become ill to return to their homes if this is possible.
- The nurse has made arrangements with our local Walgreens pharmacy for seasonal flu vaccination clinics to be held on our campus. Seasonal vaccinations will cost approximately \$25. H1N1 vaccine will be distributed through county public health departments and will be made available to residents on the basis of priority. While college students are not the top priority, vaccine will be available to them later this fall (or perhaps early this winter) and will be free of charge.
- Members of our staff continue to gather information as it becomes available.

No matter what protocols we employ, we will not be able to prevent influenza from affecting the members of our campus family. We do hope that good information and careful practices will minimize the number and severity of flu cases on our campus. If you, as a parent, have concerns or questions, we hope that you will contact us!