

Faculty FAQs for H1N1

What are symptoms of seasonal flu and H1N1 flu? Fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. A fever is a temperature that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

How do I know if a student has H1N1 flu or seasonal flu? It will be very hard to tell if someone who is sick has the H1N1 flu or seasonal flu. Public health officials are not recommending laboratory tests. Anyone who has the symptoms of flu-like illness should stay at home and not attend class.

What fever-reducing medications can students, faculty, and staff take when sick? Fever-reducing medications are medicines that contain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Motrin or Advil). These medicines can be given to people who are sick with flu to help bring their fever down and relieve pain. Aspirin should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age.

What can faculty do to encourage students to stay home when they're sick? Consider altering policies to ensure that there are no academic consequences for staying home while sick (e.g. no punishment for missed classes and examinations, turning in assignments late). Establish a method of communicating with students who are sick (e.g. email, text messages). Let the student know that he/she can obtain class assignments, etc. by visiting the class website, having a classmate deliver homework packets, placing phone calls, or email the faculty or designee.

What steps can faculty take in the classroom to keep from spreading the flu? Make tissues and hand sanitizers readily available in your classroom. If classroom logistics permit, encourage social distancing (increase space between chairs). Discourage students from extending courtesies (handshakes, friendly hugs, etc.) that require close contact. Encourage students, faculty, and staff to find out if they should get vaccinated against seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu. The Student Health Center will be offering the seasonal flu vaccine in mid-September and the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available www.csus.edu/hlth.

How should I refer a student who appears to be sick in my class? Suggest that the student contact the Student Health Center by phone at 278-6461. The Student Health Center has set up a phone triage system so that the student can talk directly to a medical provider to determine if it is necessary for the student to be seen at the clinic. Staying away from others while sick can prevent others from getting sick too.

How can faculty best prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 academic year? Review and revise departmental flu (or emergency) response plans and procedures, including plans to protect students, faculty, and staff. Update faculty and staff contact information as well as emergency contact lists. Develop a plan to cover faculty and staff during extended absences due to illness.

When should a student or faculty return to the classroom? Advise sick students or faculty to stay at home or in their residence until fever free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen).

Should I expect a student to have a written doctor's note to return to class? No.

The recommendation from medical providers may be to stay at home and self-isolate. Students may not have a written excuse from a medical provider for their absence. Faculty need to accommodate absences related to illnesses and students need to know that this is okay.

Should I be concerned if students wear masks to class? No. Students may wear masks to class for several reasons – allergies, personal protection from airborne illness, or to protect others from a real or perceived illness they may have. However, students wearing masks that have flu-like symptoms should be encouraged to go home. If a student is seen at the Student Health Center with flu-like symptoms they may be given a mask with instructions to go home until fever free for 24 hours.

If faculty have questions who should they call? Health or medical questions concerning students should be directed to Student Health Services, Joy Stewart-James, jsjames@csus.edu at 278-6035. Questions pertaining to faculty, staff, or campus-wide issues should be directed to Mike Christensen, Risk Management Services at 278-5252.